THE

PROJECTOR;

COLLECTION OF ESSAYS,

IN THE MANNER OF THE SPECTATOR,

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

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BY

ALEXANDER CHALMERS, F.S.A.

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THE PROJECTOR

THE PROJECTOR. No 68.

—"Obtritum vulgi perit omne cadaver
More animæ."— JUVENAL.

"Not the soul alone,
But bodies, like the soul, invisibly are flown."
DRYDEN.

March 1807.

In one of my very early PROJECTORS (No. VIII.) I took the liberty to address my readers on the subject of *seeing sights*, and going into mobs; and as it was generally confessed that those adventures were accompanied with no small degree of inconvenience, and even of danger, I offered a PROJECT by which both might be avoided. How far that Project was relished, I have not much opportunity of learning; but that it was not universally adopted I have

some very striking reasons for believing. It is the peculiar misfortune of us PROJECTORS that our schemes are generally thought to be impracticable or useless, that they are either laid aside without trial, or that there is something in the success of them which interferes with superior interest, or more favourite propensities.

I am not, however, the more disposed to retract what I advanced in that paper on the subject of CURIOSITY, from the rejection of my plan. I am still convinced that, if not kept within proper bounds, Curiosity, and especially that species of it called *idle* Curiosity, has a tendency to lead to exertions unprofitable or dangerous. It consumes time, which no man has yet found the art of restoring; and it confers a degree of distinction upon persons and things of which they are unworthy. I am likewise still disposed to think that they who imagine they are honoured by the collection of a mob, have very little of which they ought to be proud. That species of curiosity which brings together an immense concourse of people possesses so little of the gift of discrimination, that an election or an execution, a funeral or an air balloon, will collect equal numbers.

But from the mere inconvenience and inutility of vulgar curiosity and mobs, my attention, as well as that of the publick at large, has very lately been diverted to consider of the danger which arises from these tumultuous meetings. I need scarcely inform my readers, that I advert to what took place at the Old Bailey on the twenty-third of February, a calamity in which thirty persons fell a sacrifice to that species of curiosity which of all others seems in vain to call for an apology; and, I may add, a calamity which for its extent is unparalleled in the history of casualties, there being nothing to account for it of the common kind, as the falling of houses or scaffolds, but merely the force of mutual pressure and resistance, occasioned by a sudden paroxysm, if I may use the expression, of extreme curiosity, excited at one and the same moment of time.

The impression which this calamity appears to have made on the public mind is no other than might have been expected from a people who in general are wise and thinking; but that a great proportion of them are of a very opposite disposition is certain from what has happened, and may be confirmed by what will again happen when the memory of this calamity becomes faint, and some new temptation

of a similar kind presents itself to those who delight in shocking spectacles. Inquiries, too, have been instituted with a view to prevent accidents in future; but however wisely or well these inquiries have been pursued, there is much reason to think that it will be difficult to apply an effectual remedy.

Of all spectacles, that of the execution of criminals appears to be most repugnant to moral and humane feelings; yet in all countries, even in those where executions are attended with circumstances of torture unknown here, executions have ever attracted vast assemblies of the people. All hasten with uncommon eagerness, to behold with their eyes, what others with as much eagerness would dismiss from their imagination and idea, as far as it is possible; what no man of feeling can bear to hear described with minuteness; and what has been generally detailed, if detailed at all, in as few words as can convey the fact.

In France, we have been informed by travellers, that persons of rank and fortune, or what are called genteel company, used to compose a part of the spectators at executions. The case, now at least, is different in this country; the *amateurs* of such spectacles being, with few exceptions, the very lowest, and, I

am afraid, not the very best members of society. Where it is otherwise, where any persons above the lower classes have been induced to attend, they have either concealed the circumstance from shame, or acknowledged that they were induced to endure such a sight from some particular reason, as the quality of the sufferer, or the noise he and his crimes had made in the world. Still the general sentiment is so averse to the indulgence of this species of curiosity, that very few persons of education and refinement can prevail upon themselves to make the attempt; and of those few, there are perhaps none who are not anxious to excuse themselves in the best manner they can.

Yet for those who make a constant or a frequent practice of attending executions, some apology may be found in the nature of the punishment itself. Our ancestors decreed that our capital punishments should be *public*, and thus be in conformity to every proceeding in our courts of law, and the exercise of every branch of power invested in any person or persons by our excellent constitution. It has indeed been thought by some writers, that capital punishments would produce more effect, or at least as much, if they were inflicted in

private, in the presence only of certain con-stituted authorities. But while this is not, and never has been the legal practice in this country, we are to consider whether the publicity of capital punishments does not afford an apology for the multitudes who frequent them. If they are ordered to be public, it is that they are intended to be seen. Whatever is ordered to be done in public is virtually accompanied by an invitation to the people to behold it. Public solemnities of all kinds without spectators, would be an absurdity, if they were practicable; and with regard to the national solemnities which we have lately witnessed, such as the Royal processions to St. Paul's, and the funerals of Lord Nelson and Mr. Fox, the assembling of the people is a *necessary* part of the honours of the day. It is the honour which the people pay; and without it, the cause of the solemnity would be deemed unpopular.

Thus far, therefore, all public spectacles stand upon the same footing, as being equally authorised by law, and by the custom of our ancestors. There may indeed seem to every sensible mind, such a difference between the funeral of a hero, and the execution of a murderer, that all comparison must appear pre-

posterous, nor can the parties who delight in the former, be by any means induced to behold the latter; yet the spectators of both are invited by the constitution of the ceremony; and the vulgar who crowd the Old Bailey, and the fashionables who besiege the doors of St. Paul's, are equally contributing to render that public which was ordered to be public, and which would not be public if there were any restrictions imposed.

But there is a material difference in public spectacles, to which it is necessary to advert, and which seems to furnish another excuse for the spectators of executions. The processions and funerals to which I have alluded, are matters of general respect and honour; but undoubtedly our executions were by our ancestors ordered to be public, not only because the people should be satisfied that justice had been done according to the sentence of the law, but that they might be warned by the fate of the sufferers to avoid those crimes, and temptations to crimes, which brought the convicts to their untimely end. Now, if the matter be considered in this light, the spectator at an execution is as much in the way of his duty as he who listens to any other species of instruction; and he may be said to be expressly invited to

behold that which it is hoped will make a suitable impression on his thoughtless mind. Such unquestionably was one principal reason of the publicity of capital punishments; or if we assign another reason, the *disgrace* which attends public punishments, still the result will be the same, for there can be no disgrace if there are no witnesses.

Such, then, are the inducements held out by the law and custom of centuries past, and which ought to be taken into the account, when we are disposed to blame the curiosity which led to the late very awful event, and particularly when we are considering in what manner similar accidents may be prevented. However the well-educated and refined part of the publick may censure that curiosity which leads multitudes to behold executions, the attempt will be in vain to extirpate it by any argument, or any appeal to the feelings. We may as well desire a mob of persons all equally eager for a good place, to fall back, or divide their ranks with the regularity of a well-trained regiment. If we wish to apply an effectual preventive, it must be by the strong hand of authority; and for this we have precedents so recent and applicable, that we cannot pretend ignorance on the subject. It has been observed,

with pleasing surprize, that in all our late Royal processions and funeral solemnities, although they attracted a greater number of spectators than both town and country ever before afforded, yet not one accident, worthy of notice or compassion, occurred. The reason of all this was obvious; the presence of the military, dispersed in regular directions, yet nowhere obstructing the view of the spectators, gave not only a solemnity, but a safety to those spectacles, which could never have been effected by any other means.

It may, however, be thought too respectful to the witnesses of executions, to employ the military in preventing their doing one another a mischief. It may be said that such mobs have no business there, and might be more usefully employed at home, or in their business; and that no moral good is done by public executions. All this is in a great measure true; yet our laws are too humane and too wise to permit men to injure one another from whatever motive or necessity; and while public executions are continued, the populace are virtually invited to behold them. I am afraid, indeed, that they leave no lasting impression; and perhaps a continued inclination to witness such scenes is a strong presumption of hardness

of heart. That mind is certainly in no very promising state of amendment, which requires punishment to amend it; and perhaps still less can be hoped of him who delights in witnessing capital punishments from no other motive than curiosity. Yet public safety is an important object; and the character of the nation would be implicated if means could be found to prevent such a calamity as that in question, and yet those means be rejected.

But I have perhaps been led into matters foreign to my province, in speaking of the duties of the Police, or the Magistrate. It is more strictly my business to consider such affairs in a very different light; and I cannot, therefore, conclude this paper, without offering a few additional remarks on curiosity in general, and at the same time referring my readers to No. VIII. before-mentioned.

If the passion for mobbing were confined to the lower classes, it would be sufficient punishment to denounce it as vulgar and ungentlemanlike. But unfortunately there are genteel mobs as well as vulgar; and such is the unceremonious nature of curiosity, that the compression and suffocation of persons of fashion is no wise distinguishable from that of the lower classes. There is much ceremony

observed in entering a room, but none in the passage that leads to it. There is a nice distinction of ranks and of sex in the seats of public places, but no allowance for rank or sex in the avenues through which we have to pass. And although this creates not only inconvenience, but even danger, it is so generally accounted an honour to produce a mob, that all the difficulties of access or retreat are detailed among the most pleasant circumstances of the affair; and the player's benefit, or the lady's rout, which is accompanied by such incidents, is considered as enjoying an enviable superiority.

A mob, therefore, is not always collected from curiosity. It is a mark of high respect; and that such respect may be secured beyond all possibility of failure from excuses and pre-engagements, a far greater number are invited than are either expected to come, or could be contained in the house if they did. The assemblage, indeed, is nominally a party, or a party of friends; but in what such a party differs from a mob, the essence of which is mixture and compression, we are not told; and in what manner to distinguish one mob from another, unless by dress, is yet a *desideratum* in the philosophy of social life.

It has been thought that of late years the spirit of genteel mobbing has increased. It is certain that we read in the papers of much greater crowds or mobs at public places than was the case formerly. Perhaps one reason is, that the people are not so often left to form their own conjectures respecting public shows and spectacles. So much is said before-hand by the various arts of puffing, that natural curiosity is increased by these artificial excitements. How far the accident which is the subject of this paper, may tend to damp the fervour of mobbing, remains to be discovered. I have heard, however, of one lady who after tenderly lamenting the death of so many "poor wretches" in the Old Bailey, went the same evening to one of the theatres, and declared on her return, that she never was more frightened, as she was very near being thrown down and trod upon, in endeavouring to get into the pit. Persons of such feeling as this will no doubt take warning, and make—*for the boxes.*

THE PROJECTOR. No. 69.

"Credula res Amor est." OVID.

April 1807.

THE complaint many years ago repeated often and bitterly, that the fair sex was neglected, by being left out of our systems of education, and but indifferently treated in the œconomy of social order, cannot, perhaps, be urged in the present day with so much propriety. Either from a sense of justice, or an increase of gallantry, numerous Projectors have appeared of late, vigorously bent on raising the ladies above every degree of depression or inferiority; and not only on assigning, but preparing them to hold their just rank in society.

The means by which this favourable change has been brought about are various. Some have supposed that the ladies, being by nature fitted to shine in all the honourable departments usually filled by the other sex, have conceived that nothing more was wanted than to restore to them a right of which they had

in some dark and barbarous age been deprived. Others, conceiving that whatever the original intentions of nature were, continual oppression may vitiate the breed of the noblest animals, have proposed to restore the capabilities of the fair sex, by alloting them the same education as is given to the males, and instructing them in such manly branches of science as may revive, if I may so speak, their lost nature, and restore that equality which the advocates for this system have found, or imagined they have found, in some distant period of the golden age.

Whether these schemes are founded upon sound principles, and are calculated to produce wise effects, is a question which I shall not venture to discuss. I am assured, however, by some of the most amiable, and some of the most learned of the fair sex, that in attempting to cure a positive evil, some of these Projectors have lost themselves; and have bewildered their readers, in the search after an imaginary good. While they have very properly contended against the barbarians who would consider women as mere children, or mere instruments of pleasure or tyranny, they have at the same time forgot that, under every modification of their condition, they ought to retain

the feminine character in order to be objects of superior respect and attachment. My informants also assure me, that the best interests of the sex do not require that they should be admitted into a participation of the amusements or of the business hitherto pursued by men only; and that it is no more necessary for them to learn their athletic sports of hunting and horse-races, than it is to learn the manual exercise, and be qualified to hold commissions in the army and navy. And even with regard to literature, although some of the sex have been admired for excelling in those studies that have almost universally been pursued by men, and although a much more considerable portion of useful knowledge may be easily acquired by the fair sex than has hitherto been taught them, yet those who are candidates for the honourable offices of wives and mothers are of opinion, that a critical knowledge of the learned languages, and of some abstruse parts of the sciences, are not absolutely necessary to the proper discharge of those offices, but may on the contrary interrupt the usual process of election.

Notwithstanding these opinions, which have operated as a check on the writers who some years ago were more intent on reversing the

qualities of the sexes, than on giving proper strength to the weakest; the subjects which necessarily arise from the main contest have since been better understood, and a visible improvement has certainly taken place in many essential articles, while enough is yet left to the masters of ceremonies and arbiters of taste, if they are not unreasonable in their demands, and will but now and then consent to yield to such trifling circumstances as common sense and common decency. They have, I am willing to allow, been robbed of some of their votaries, who have thought proper to judge for themselves in matters of female delicacy and family happiness; but they have still a sufficient number left, who are contented to submit without a murmur to their decrees, and are ready to make every sacrifice that may be required.

But, although much has been done to ameliorate the condition of the fair sex, there is yet an opinion that farther steps ought to be taken, particularly in providing young ladies with proper advice in that very essential affair, LOVE, or COURTSHIP. This advice, some of my readers may remember, used formerly to be given by fathers and mothers, or any other grave relations, such as uncles and aunts, in

case of the absence or death of the said fathers and mothers. But of late, I know not why, it has been supposed that relations are the most improper persons in the world to consult in such matters, and it has been urged, that they have a very awkward trick of tendering scruples, making objections, and throwing impediments in the way of a preconcerted scheme. And indeed if, according to some very sensible young people, asking *advice* means no more than desiring approbation, such scruples, objections, and impediments, are certainly strong symptoms of impertinent and intolerable interference, and to be treated accordingly. But as the abovementioned relations do not content themselves with a simple statement of objections, but often go so far as to back them by the strong hand of power, so that sundry young persons have been prevented from doing what they had the greatest mind to do, it has been found necessary to call in other aid, and other counsellors of a more pliant disposition. And so convenient has this been found, that I have known an affair of courtship brought to an ultimate conclusion without any other advice than that of a lady's maid, or a postillion, although there was a numerous family of very near relatives, who might have had the honour

to be consulted, if they would have been as liberal of their approbation as of their advice, and had not retained a propensity to give a denial where consent only was expected.

I have been induced to offer these remarks upon the general state of the fair sex, and especially with a view to the important articles of LOVE and COURTSHIP, by having seen an advertisement in several of the public newspapers. I at first considered it as a sportive effusion, but I am now convinced the writer of it deserves to be ranked among the first PROJECTORS of the age, and I accordingly hail her as a sister. The advertisement, the object of which is to remove all the obstacles above-noticed, is in the following words:

"LADIES."

"THE delicate and restrained condition which custom imposes on females, subjects them to great disadvantages. Mrs. Morris offers to remove them. Ladies or Gentlemen who have formed predilections may be assisted in obtaining the objects of their affection; and those who are unengaged may be immediately introduced to suitable persons; but she will not assist applicants in any marriage, if their characters are not irreproachable, and their fortunes independent.

" Apply or address (post paid) at the Bow-window, next door to Margaret chapel, Margaret-street, Cavendish-square.

" Ladies may be waited on at their own houses; when she will be able to convince them that she is employed by persons of the highest respectability, and is deserving of the utmost confidence."

This advertisement so fully displays the Lady's scheme, and the power she possesses to carry it into execution, that I might perhaps close my paper here, and allow it the full effect of its own persuasive eloquence. I ought to be afraid, indeed, lest any supplement of mine might injure the impression which the offer of a Lady " of the utmost confidence" has a natural tendency to create, or might check the burst of gratitude that will issue from the hearts of all " Ladies or Gentlemen who have formed predilections;" but I cannot dismiss the philanthropical tenant of the Bow-window in this abrupt manner. I have ever been desirous to convince my readers that I harbour no envy of my brethren PROJECTORS, and I cannot do this more effectually than by expatiating on a scheme as obviously important, as it is modestly proposed.

It will be observed that I have borrowed from Mrs. Morris the principal idea in this paper; namely, "the delicate and restrained condition which CUSTOM imposes on females," and from which she offers to relieve them by a much more expeditious method than any of us Projectors could have conceived. It is indeed the peculiar weakness of the tribe of Projectors to which I belong, that what little good we propose must be effected by very slow and deliberate methods, requiring so much time and so many little revolutions necessary to produce the great revolution in view, that, although we contrive our plans in deep wisdom, a generation or two may go off the stage without reaping any benefit from them. Here is, for example, that enemy of all enemies the most difficult to conquer, *Custom*, an enemy which, unlike all others, grows more invincible the older he is; and therefore it is generally found that when he reaches the age of an hundred, those who endeavour to oppose him are thought to commit an act of lunacy. If, however, any of us had been so bold as to meditate his downfal, by what cautious approaches and guarded attacks should we have attempted it! How many hints and inuendos should we have thrown into the town, before

we adventured boldly to march up to the gates! And how many little difficulties should we have endeavoured to remove, before we had attempted to conquer the great obstacle!

Not so the wisdom which screens itself behind the Bow-window. She who, as a proof of her skill, "has been employed by persons of the highest respectability," at once "offers to remove" the disadvantages which arise from "the delicate and restrained condition which Custom imposes on females." In what manner she effects this, by what long study, or perhaps intuitive skill, she has arrived at the happy art of removing the pernicious consequences of female delicacy, we know not, and perhaps we ought not to desire to know. The reward of such an invention ought to be her's who brings it forward, undisturbed by the pryings of curiosity, or the more dangerous invasions of those pirates who are at war with every species of patent wisdom, from a steam-engine to a strengthening plaster.

All we know from the advertisement is, that "Ladies or Gentlemen who have formed predilections may be assisted in obtaining the objects of their affections;" and this is certainly knowing a great deal. Besides that it displays Mrs. Morris's skill in uniting the divided, we

have here some information which is a little unexpected. It appears that not only ladies, but gentlemen, may labour under a "delicate and restrained condition;" a circumstance which, although I have seldom known it to exist, yet I am happy to find it has not escaped those extensive views of the world that are taken from the "Bow-window, next door to Margaret chapel." It would be a curious addition to the history of manners, if we had been told how long gentlemen had been restrained by their delicacy; for it has generally been supposed that *Custom* had given them an unlimited power of commencing those operations which tend "to obtaining the objects of their affections." Mrs. Morris, however, appears to have met with another class, a new order of men; and she very properly offers her assistance. To a swain so nervously delicate, so humbly diffident, her advertisement cries, in the language of our immortal Bard,

——Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee *——

* Lady Macbeth; who, according to Shakspeare's authority, had been pretty successful in divesting herself of "the delicate and restrained condition of her sex."

But this is not all. There is another class of persons who may see their interest through the Bow-window. "Those who are *unengaged* may be immediately introduced to suitable persons." In the ordinary course of things, marriage is seldom a matter of speculation until the object of our affections is discovered; but this sagacious Projector seems to be of opinion that very good matches may be contrived where there is no engagement on either side, and between whom there has been no intercourse but that which may be brought about behind the "Bow-window, next door to Margaret chapel;" and which, as she takes care they are "suitable persons," must end in a bargain at first sight. Singular as this part of the scheme appears, there may be advantages annexed to it. It may shorten the miseries of tedious courtship; it seems to free the parties from all danger of parental interference; and their *suitableness* to each other being a matter previously decided by this intelligent Projector, the parties, if very young, may have one point settled of which they are generally supposed to be very incompetent judges.

By what means the Sibyl of the Bow-window has attained such an extensive knowledge of man and woman kind in this great metro-

polis, as to be able to supply a suitable husband or a wife on the shortest notice, she has not informed us. But it is some comfort to those who are apt to be doubtful and inquisitive, that she is "able to convince the ladies that she is employed by persons of the highest respectability, and is deserving of the utmost confidence." Such employment, and such confidence, must have laid open to her the unhappy condition of many "delicate and restrained females," and other *unengaged* persons; and we may suppose, without infringing on her patent, that she keeps regular accounts of debtor and creditor to Hymen, and can supply every one *in that line*, the moment that an application is made to the Bow-window.

Having thus offered a few remarks on the novelty and utility of this Lady's plan, which is certainly one of the boldest attempts to remove delicacy and restraint of condition that the present century has witnessed, I shall only add what redounds very much to her honour, and renders her plan wonderfully consistent; namely, that "she will not assist applicants in any marriage if their characters are not irreproachable." I had intended to close this paper with an article so creditable to the lady; but I am compelled to object to a clause which

immediately follows it. In this she demands not only that their characters should be irreproachable, but also "their fortunes considerable and independent." I am always sorry when I see a plan calculated to do good, confined to persons of a certain class only; and I could have wished the blessings of the Bow-window could have been extended to the middling and poor classes, who, I can assure Mrs. Morris, would frequently be much obliged to her for *suitable* husbands or wives. Besides, there is some reason to think (if the lady did not know her business better than we can) that persons of considerable and independent fortunes have generally been allowed the privilege of choosing for themselves, without the restraint either of Thisbe's wall, or Mrs. Morris's Bow-window. Still I allow that the lady may be right, and may have derived from experience this comfortable truth, that where there is considerable wealth, there may be considerable credulity, and that the fortune may be independent, while the mind is the dupe of the meanest impostures.

THE PROJECTOR, Nº 70.

May 1807.

"TO THE AUTHOR OF THE PROJECTOR.

"SIR,

"WE are greatly indebted to you for the contents of your last paper, in which you have proved your candour by recommending the plan of one of your brethren, or rather Sister-projectors, and have at the same time demonstrated your regard for the public good, by explaining that plan, and expatiating on its benefits in a more extensive manner than the lady of the Bow-window has thought proper to do. You have, indeed, amplified her liberality so much, that I find it impossible to add one word to the many useful explanations you have given, and should have contented myself with silent approbation of your labours, had not some hints thrown out in the introductory passages of your paper, revived the memory of a plan which I projected a few years ago, but have never communicated to the publick for want of such a convenient vehicle as your lu-

cubrations now afford; and, as I find that no jealous rivalship contracts your care for the interests of the sex, I shall now take the liberty of communicating it.

"Although, Sir, I agree with you that much of the inequality of the sexes has been removed by the more liberal spirit of the present age, and that the ladies are allowed, in many respects, to share our privileges, and not only our amusements but our studies; yet it has been suggested to me, principally by perusing the writings of some of our female philosophers, that in one respect we have not conceded to the ladies a privilege which the said philosophers think they ought to enjoy in common with us, I mean the privilege of COURTSHIP. I need not tell you, Sir, although I am obliged to state it for the sake of regular connection in my argument, that at present Courtship, or the privilege of making a choice in affairs of love, is entirely confined to the gentlemen, while the ladies have no other power than that of giving their negative to a proposal; and this is attended with a great many inconveniences. If a lady, for example, is known to have frequently given the said negative, although she may have just and wise reasons for so doing, she is considered as having wholly abdicated the state of matri-

mony, and removed her name from the list of candidates.

"But, that I may obviate all objections as they occur, I am willing to allow what some will be ready to assert, that the privilege of choice is not so entirely confined to the gentlemen, as that there are no instances where ladies have very successfully exercised the same. This may be granted. We have had of late a few instances of bold departure from prescribed custom, or what the lady of the Bow-window would call the "delicate and restrained condition of females." But, on the one hand, these instances are so few, and have been received with so little approbation, that they merely form exceptions to the general rule; and on the other hand, this choice has fallen so frequently on inferiors, such as footmen, or other menial servants, that it would be unhandsome to suppose it would ever become a successful precedent.

"I may therefore take it for granted, that in the present state of things, the privilege of Courtship is exclusively in the power of the men; and as many thousands of them, for what reasons they best know, never exercise their privilege at all, there must be at least an equal proportion of the ladies who are thus

deprived of an opportunity of exerting their negative. Mrs. Morris, I grant, goes a considerable way in endeavouring to remedy this evil; she assists ladies 'who have formed predilections;' and she introduces unengaged ladies to suitable persons, that they may make a choice. All this is well as far as it goes; but the blessings of her Bow-window are necessarily limited, first, by her confining her skill to the higher orders, to persons of irreproachable characters and independent fortunes, and of the highest respectability, who, one might suppose, are very capable, and would be very well content to transact their affairs without her aid; and secondly, the good she can do is yet more necessarily limited by the very nature of it, namely, the immense number of persons to whom her aid would be agreeable, but to whom it is impossible that one individual behind a Bow-window, or a thousand individuals behind a thousand Bow-windows, could administer relief.

"And this, Mr. PROJECTOR, brings me to my plan, which you may think is merely an extension of Mrs. Morris's, but I assure you it is much older. Instead, then, of allowing this lady, with all her merit, to get rich upon the 'delicate and restrained condition of females,'

I would propose an act of parliament to grant the privilege of Courtship to females, in as full and sufficient a manner as the said privilege is now enjoyed by us; namely, by paying their addresses either in sighs, visits, tender billets, long epistles, songs, set speeches, or other means whereby Courtships are usually brought to a proper and speedy termination. And that nothing may be rashly done in a case of this sort, I would farther propose that this be an annual act, like the mutiny bill, and subject to such revisions as experience, or petitions and remonstrances, may suggest.

"This, Mr. PROJECTOR, is the whole of my plan. I am aware that at first sight it may seem liable to objections, yet I question whether many of those objections may not be satisfactorily answered; and I think that, upon the whole, it would have several advantages over the partial relief proposed by the benevolent tenant of the Bow-window. Ladies of all ranks, who 'have formed predilections,' would have it in their power to do for themselves what Mrs. Morris proposes to do for them; and in general, I presume, would be as well pleased to choose for themselves, as to submit to her judgment.

"But as to objections, the first and most im-

portant is the innovating nature of my scheme. It will be said that it is not only new, but a departure from the immemorial custom of all nations, and such a breach of the established laws of decorum, as no advantages can justify. To this I shall answer, that the laws of decorum are different in different ages, and in different nations. Reasoning from analogy only, there have been innovations of late years sanctioned by general custom, which some persons have accounted as great violations of decorum as what I now propose. For example, would a frank avowal of inclinations be a greater breach of delicacy, than that exposure of person which we have lately copied from our gay neighbours on the Continent? The truth is, that when we have once established that what the majority practise shall be right and proper, or, in other words, that what fashion prescribes shall be beyond the limits of controul or censure, I hope that a practice established by act of parliament will have as good a chance of being adopted, as that which we borrow only from a few milliners or mantua-makers, who are not in general better judges of delicacy and decorum than the legislators of St. Stephen's Chapel.

"There are other objections that have been occasionally suggested to me in conversation,

upon which I do not think it necessary to enlarge in this letter, because they are merely such as attend the present system; and therefore, supposing them to be vaiid, we should not upon the whole be in a worse condition then than now. My plan does not profess to exclude the evils of jealousy and rivalship; but yet even in these respects I think it would have a tendency to alleviate. Some bachelors of my acquaintance have assured me, that if they were to be courted, they should accept the offer of their suitoresses with a more easy mind than if they themselves had paid their addresses to ladies 'of a delicate and restrained condition.' Heirs, and young men of vast fortunes, would, perhaps, be beset by applications, as heiresses are now; but still the parties would not be reciprocally in a worse condition, since neither would be deprived of their negative privilege. With respect to pouting, quarrels, and coquetry, as my plan has no tendency to prohibit them, so I should be sorry to introduce any clauses in the act which should seem to interfere with such common, and what some think such becoming airs.

"It has been suggested to me, that, in point of fact, my proposition is not new; and that during one in every four years, the sex, by long

custom, have been allowed the privilege of Courtship, which year has been termed *Leap year*, or the year in which the sex are permitted to leap the usual bounds of delicacy. But although I do not deny that I first took my hint from that year, it is notorious that the custom has long become obsolete, so long, indeed, that I am doubtful whether it can be revived even by the strongest possible sanction, that of an act of parliament. However, if my plan be successful, I shall not be sorry to be deprived of the merit of originality, since I must inevitably have the higher honour of bringing to perfection what alone seems wanting to aid the benevolent views of the lady celebrated in your last paper; I shall, therefore, leave the whole matter, Mr. PROJECTOR, to your consideration; and subscribe myself, with all respect and humility,

"A BROTHER OF THE TRADE."

I have given my BROTHER's letter all the consideration he can wish, and have besides submitted it to my readers. At the same time I am nothing loth to confess, that with due submission to him and to those writers from whom he seems to have borrowed his first thoughts, I am inclined to wish that matters, as to Court-

ship, may remain for a few years longer in their present state. He allows that his plan would not prevent any of the existing inconveniences of Courtship; and I see, or think I see, many evils that would arise from such a reverse in the affairs of love, and would be counterbalanced only by the advantage, if it may be so termed, of knowing *who began first?*

As to those ladies who have made experiments of his plan upon a small scale, I have no desire to interfere with their courage. We live in an age of innovations; and they who seek fame, or as it is sometimes called notoriety, find new paths in which their pride and security is, and I hope ever will be, that they have few followers. And others, who are disposed to choose for themselves against established practice, and have not yet been quite emancipated from "the delicate and restrained condition which custom imposes on females," may at any time consult the Bow window, and produce as surprising effects in the newspapers and the courts of law, as if they had acted without any advice at all, which is the more common practice.

Doubtless, however, were my correspondent's plan established by *law*, the publick

would be amused by many singular events. Many families would at first be thrown into confusion by the double portion of care imposed on parents, who must be perplexed to know whether to look most sharply after their sons or their daughters. Yet I am not sure that much mischief would arise merely from this effect of the plan, as some young gentlemen might then be courted into marriage, instead of, according to the present custom, being seduced into ruin. Upon the new plan too, I am of opinion, that if the ladies were permitted, or could be persuaded to pay their addresses, they would execute this task with a greater degree of sincerity, and with fewer sinister motives. But still I would not have my readers suppose that I am friendly to such an innovation: and I am not quite sure that it would be approved by my own sex. For myself, I have my personal reasons, and, like the rest of my sex, would be afraid of numberless and perplexing addresses, from those who may not know the PROJECTOR's situation. I have, therefore, enjoined Mr. URBAN to preserve his usual secresy on that subject, and to hint no particulars of face, person, or fortune, until he receives farther orders.

THE PROJECTOR. Nº 71.

June 1807.

THERE is a species of men who are said to be so very precise that there is no living with them; so straight and tight-laced, and so obstinate in preserving all the minutiæ of virtue, honour, and honesty, as to be quite unfit to carry on business in the present world. They are said to be dangerous connections, because they throw impediments in the way of those who wish to follow the example of their neighbours, and do not happen to think it necessary to be so very particular in matters where interest is concerned. Whether this sect, for such we shall call them, be numerous, and likely to put a stop to the common business of life by their obstinate adherence to the strict laws of virtue, honour, and honesty; and whether, if such a consequence be probable, they ought not to be suppressed as dangerous impediments in the way of ambitious men, are questions so easily resolved, that I shall leave them to the consideration of my readers.

It is some comfort, however, to those who are apt to complain of precise and Puritanical conduct, that there are others, and, I should suppose, a much more numerous body, who are clearly of opinion, that the laws of virtue, honour, and honesty, are not so strict in the letter, as that they may not be accommodated to immediate wants and necessities. They think that these laws are not only capable of being relaxed upon particular occasions, but that such relaxation is become so common as to be attended with no impeachment of character, or loss of reputation. In short, the rule seems to be that, if these laws should appear to be contrary to the attainment of a favourite object, although they cannot be actually and totally repealed, without giving offence to the universal opinion of mankind, yet on great occasions they may be suspended in their operation, and the parties relieved from their obligations during a certain period to be agreed upon.

It may be thought, at first sight, a little singular, that any men who have once admitted the obligations of virtue, honour, and honesty, as perpetually, and in all possible cases, of full force, insomuch that no objects, even life itself, are considered as of too great importance to be sacrificed rather than to admit a violation

of the laws of truth, sincerity, and rectitude, should ever admit such a doctrine as I have now stated. And this will appear yet the more singular, when we consider that men of honour, as they are called, and as they wish to be esteemed, do upon all occasions insist upon the obligations now mentioned, as not only necessary, but highly ornamental to their character, and are ready to resent every imputation that respects their veracity and sincerity, as what can be atoned by nothing less than the blood of the accuser. Yet, however inconsistent this may appear, nothing is more certain than that these very persons are ever the readiest to admit a relaxation of the above laws, when they have certain favourite objects in view; and, if this should to some of my readers seem incredible or impossible, I can only refer them to events which are daily passing, and request them also to recollect that, if the laws of honour are capable of being suspended, why may not those of common sense?

I have been led into this strain of reflection by observing the operation of a principle established during the late election bustle throughout the kingdom; and which is expressed in this plain proposition, that "every thing is *fair* at an election;" or, in other words, that

a seat in Parliament is an object of such transcendent importance, that no means whatever must be considered as unfair which can be employed. Accordingly, among the means usually resorted to, we find a long catalogue of delusions and deceptions, in the shape not only of public addresses and professions, but of private agency and canvass—all of which, employed on any other occasion, or for any other object, would probably be honoured by epithets which I shall not at present use, as they will readily present themselves to those who may have been concerned in the detection of sharpers at the Old Bailey, or elsewhere.

Dr. Johnson has somewhere characterised a person whom he well knew, as one whose "morality hung loose about him;" a metaphor which implies that there are some who employ their morality as they employ their clothes, as a covering which may be changed, and put off or on, be made thinner or warmer, closer or looser, according to the seasons. Those persons are of course no more to be blamed for any alterations they may make in their moral system, than in their wardrobes; since, in both cases, they can dress so as to please the parties upon whom they have a design. But, although Dr. Johnson's metaphor is proper as expressing

contempt, I know not that we can carry it so far as to turn it into a law; and it will, I hope, yet be found that the stubborn and inflexible virtues are the only attributes worth prizing, and that no man can be depended on, whose sincerity is not uniform and unchangeable.

I must, however, own that among the many PROJECTS of the present age, there are few which, in point of ingenuity, can be compared to this scheme for relaxing or suspending the laws of honour and truth, merely to serve a particular purpose; and I yet more admire that skill and ingenuity by which those PROJECTORS have contrived to persuade their friends, and the world at large, that in all this there is nothing blameable, because nothing but what is common, and that "all is fair at elections."

We have read much, and we always hear much, of the character of a Gentleman. Connected with it are, a high sense of honour, a quick feeling of delicacy, which shrinks from every attack, and even from the most distant insinuations of any thing mean, degrading, unfair, or unhandsome. The Gentleman, too, prides himself particularly on an open and ingenuous dealing with all mankind; somewhat lofty, perhaps, but always candid, undisguised, and frank. Among other qualities which make

up the sum of a manly mind, is a strong sense of independence, an aversion to ask favours of any, but particularly of those whom he despises; a high opinion of the obligation of a promise, and a continual watchfulness lest he should be suspected of any word or deed that might degrade his personal character, or tarnish the honour of the family from which he descends.

By what means it was first contrived that the progress of all these virtues should be suspended, as not only of no use, but even of great detriment, during a certain number of days, I shall not pretend to investigate. I am willing, however, to think that the object was not achieved without many difficulties and objections. I have no doubt that it was at first represented that there was nothing in one object more than another which could justify a man of honour in departing from his character, and that it was not more absurd to suppose that he could do so without imputations of a very unpleasant kind, in order to get a seat in the senate, than to suppose that a poor fellow in the streets would be justified in suspending his honesty for a few minutes, while he had leisure to pick a pocket. It would, likewise, be at first represented that character was nothing if

not permanent, and that no confidence could be placed in a man, whatever his professions, who either consented to practise, or that others should practise for him, those tricks in a city or county, for which he would be hooted out of a private room.

That these objections, however, were overruled by some means, we are certain. The only point not yet fully explained is, the manner in which gentlemen have been able to satisfy their own minds on the subject; and the confidence with which they look back on a series of jockeyship that would disgrace Newmarket, and call it a victory! But as they do not condescend to explain this, farther than by repeating "that all is fair at elections," they have left us, and not very wisely in my opinion, to form our own conjectures, which, without some of those extraordinary lights by which they view such matters, must, I am afraid, be very unfavourable.

Were this suspension of the laws of honour and truth to last no longer than the prescribed time of the poll, the evil would perhaps appear to be of no great consequence, because of no great duration; and I know not whether the deceivers and the deceived are not so admirably adapted to one another, that it would be im-

pertinent to step in between them. But from all such transactions, which are justified because they are common, and practised because they promote selfish interests, there arises a kind of principle; or a system of loose morals, which descends from the hustings into the common walks of life. Some who have discovered that all is fair at elections, soon discover that all may be fair upon other occasions. The difference between the objects is of little importance; for in this respect one object does not, in reality, differ from another, if it be the prevailing object of desire. In matters of trade, there is too much reason to suspect that all is thought to be fair, when "a great stroke" is to be struck; and, as far as regards the practices of monopolizers and forestallers, that principle is continually acted upon, and with so little loss of reputation, that it is want of success only which incurs the least censure, while the only danger is that of being accounted a fool. With regard, likewise, to certain gentlemen of high honour and great opulence, who have dealt largely with Government, if *reports* are to be credited, they have carried the art of suspending the attributes of honesty and veracity to a most wonderful per-

fection; and to shew us that difference of *object* is nothing, they have demonstrated that while all is fair at an election, all may be fair even in selling a bushel of coals, a sack of flour, or a box of candles.

There is another affair in which the same laxity of principle is admitted; and, if I mistake not, this is recorded in plays and songs, for the edification of generations to come: I mean the affair of gallantry. "Tricking is fair in love," we are told; and how much of his character, as to honour, sincerity, and humanity, that man has to suspend who is bent on the ruin of an unsuspecting female, I leave to the imagination of my reader. But that he suspends those principles without voting them to be absolutely useless, is apparent from his conduct when another seducer endeavours to practise the same tricks and delusions on a sister, or other near relative. He is then obliging enough to recall his principles, and to consider the seducer as a scoundrel of the most atrocious description. This may seem inconsistent; but it is only one of the many inconsistencies into which men must be involved, who admit that upon any occasion, and for any object, that is fair which the common

sense of mankind calls mean, and that reconcileable to honour or sincerity, by which honour and sincerity are disgraced.

Notwithstanding, therefore, the advantages resulting from the operation of the principle which is the subject of this paper, and which we have had many opportunities to contemplate within these few weeks; although occasionally it may furnish prostitutes for a political party, or for a brothel; although it may sometimes enable a trader to drive a fraudulent bargain with success, or a sharper to negotiate a forged bill with impunity, it can as yet have no place in our systems of morals. It cannot be reduced to writing, and taught in our schools, because it would most probably be rejected by the common indignation of mankind. It could produce no other effect than a general relaxation of all social obligations; or a state of warfare such as we may suppose to subsist among a gang of thieves, when the dividers of the booty refuse any man, not his just share, but the share to which he thinks himself entitled. With due submission, therefore, to those men of honour who do not scruple to consider every thing fair which may gratify their ambition, it may be suggested that honour is something worse than a name, if it

does not act in conjunction with conscience; and that the delicacy of superior minds is as much above every kind of trick and jockeyship, as above the meanest acts of peculation.

The excuse, however, for all the practices to which I have alluded, ought not to pass without notice. It is not, indeed, very satisfactory, but it is the best which can be furnished— CUSTOM. What has been practised long, and practised by many, loses in time its original deformity; and we are gravely told that, whatever musty moralists may say, and however surprised persons who know not the world may be, what every one does must be right; and, therefore, "all is fair" where a beloved object is to be attained, and nothing is too mean to be practised in order to defeat him who in search of the same object depends only on candid measures, and is not versed in tricks and jockeyship.

Such an excuse, as I have hinted, may be thought unsatisfactory; but I have looked over the records of many elections, and I have found no other. There is one position, however, in it, which must not be taken for granted: it is not true that "what every one does must be right," and it is *not* true that every one adopts the principle here censured. But it certainly is too

true that many are led to relax the principles of honour, while they cannot deny that the obligation is perpetual. By what means they are induced to do so, they have not told us. The nature of ambition will in part account for such a phenomenon as a man voluntarily disgracing the character he professes to defend with his life; and the influence of example may perhaps account for the rest.

I shall conclude the subject with a story which is related of certain school-boys.

"A proposal was made to rob a cherry-orchard, which was instantly agreed to by many of the boys: others (amongst whom, says the relater of the story, I was one) objected to it as being a wrong thing, particularly as the person it belonged to was a poor man, who got his living by selling his fruit. But these arguments (though certainly just) were overbalanced by numbers; who urged that they would go; and supposing it should be found out, it would be no worse for one than another; you may, therefore, said they, as well come and partake of the fruit, for, whether you do or not, I promise you, not a cherry shall we leave upon the trees, and therefore your staying away will not be of any service to the owner. Well! if that is the

case, said one, I may as well go, to be sure, as not; and so may I, said another; and I, said a third and fourth; and I love cherries as well as any of you, said a fifth, and if the poor man is to lose them all, I may as well eat them as any body else.' Aye! and so may I too, added I (seeing them all going); if you are all determined to go, there is no use in my staying at home by myself: I think it a *wrong* thing to take the cherries; but, if you intend to strip the trees, my being of the party will do no harm."

THE PROJECTOR. No 72.

"Quod, si comminuas, vilem redigatur ad assem,
At ni id fit, quid habet pulchri constructus acervus?
HOR.

"One farthing lessen'd, you the mass reduce,
And, if not lessen'd, whence can rise its use?"
FRANCIS.

July 1807.

NATIONS, as well as individuals, are subject to a species of self-conceit, for which they are sometimes too severely blamed. The man, for

example, who prefers his own country to every other, and thinks it superior to every other, is usually reckoned a sort of political bigot. This exclusive fondness for one's own country may certainly be carried too far; and is always carried too far, when we forget that the inhabitants of other nations, if not our fellow-subjects, are at least our fellow-creatures, and equally entitled to the offices of humanity. It is carried too far, likewise, when we reject visible improvements in the state of society, or in the arts or sciences, merely because they have not originated from ourselves. But, on the other hand, a certain degree of reserve in favour of our own country is rather beneficial than hurtful. It forms no inconsiderable proportion of the union which is necessary for the defence and independence of nations; and perhaps no man can be cordially and rationally attached to the land which gave him birth, if he does not consider it as the best in the world. Whether he be right or wrong in this opinion, it will inspire him with a constant wish to make his country what he represents it, and the same prejudice existing in the minds of the inhabitants of other countries, there will be promoted a beneficial rivalship, although the

grand question of superiority may never be satisfactorily decided.

When I consider the many circumstances attached to the history and actual state of our own country, of which we are apt to make our boast, I observe none so often repeated as the flourishing and unrivalled state of our manufactures; and my readers will not be surprized that my attention should be caught by this particular in our list of national blessings; when they reflect that it is on manufactures chiefly that the whole tribe of PROJECTORS have so long employed their genius.

I am not, however, about to enter into a representation of the existing prosperity of the manufactures of Great Britain. My readers, I am convinced, do not expect such subjects to be introduced in this paper. I have nothing new to advance on the state of our linens, our woollens, our iron-works, or our potteries. But when we are congratulating one another on the improvements introduced of late years in such articles, there is one manufacture which I observe has a decided preference in all our thoughts, at least if language be the expression of thought, upon which I wish to offer a few remarks. And this is the MANUFACTURE OF

MONEY, which is supposed to employ a much greater number of hands than any other whatever. There are so few persons, indeed, in this kingdom who are not in one way or other employed in this manufacture, that the moment we hear or read of any person's death, the first and most important question is, what money did he make? And if this be answered in the negative, if it turns out that he has left few samples of his ingenuity behind him, it is concluded, without any farther inquiry, that he must have been a very bungling hand.

Friends who meet after long separation are always desirous to have this important question mutually resolved, what money they have made? and it is wonderful how much the continuance of their friendship, its fervency and constancy, will frequently depend on the answers given. If a gentleman who has lived many years in London returns to pay a visit to his native place, be the distance what it may, however remote to all appearance from the bustling world, whether in the depth of the valley, or on the top of the mountain, he will always find some whose curiosity will lead them to make immediate inquiry into the state of the above-mentioned manufacture; and he will be received with welcome or coolness in

proportion to the samples he is able to produce. Such aversion do mankind entertain against idleness in this business of making money; and such is their opinion of the nature of this manufacture, particularly in London, that they cannot conceive how a man can fail from any other cause than idleness.

This notion, however, is not perfectly correct. It is an error to consider the manufacture of money as bearing a close resemblance to that of cotton, or wool, or any other article in which some persons are employed for the benefit of other persons. The case is different in the making of money; for here every man works for himself, and has his own particular art and mystery, which he is not very desirous of communicating, at least before he leaves off business.

There are various other points in which this manufacture cannot be compared to those of Lancashire, Yorkshire, or Warwickshire. One very striking difference is, that many persons who have manufactured a very great quantity of money, are so far from being desirous to find a market for it, as the Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham men do, that they become exceedingly anxious to hide it from the knowledge of every human being. Nay they

are so far from being proud of their production, that it is with great reluctance, and often with visible pain, that they can be compelled to bring forward the smallest quantity of what they have been making. Yet, perhaps, while they are thus affecting secrecy, and what some people would think humility, you cannot affront them more than by supposing that their stock on hand is not immense, or that they are inferior in that respect to any of their neighbours. Of all this, my readers must remember very striking instances a few years ago, when the late minister, Mr. Pitt, determined, for a particular reason, to know the exact state of those manufactures, and to compel the best workmen to produce every year a certain proportion of their goods. The reluctance with which some obeyed this order, and the many artifices which others invented to evade it, may perhaps appear as a proof, that they are plain, unaffected men, who do not wish to make a parade of their industry, who "do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame." But we must not give them credit for so much of the self-denying spirit. The truth is, they generally fix a time when they shall bring their goods to market, but, whether from delaying this time too long, or neglecting to

keep their own appointment; it has in very many instances happened, that they have gone out of the world without performing their promise.

All this in the case of any other manufacture would be very foolish; because either the market would be lost, the article would sink in price, or it would be entirely spoiled by long keeping. On the contrary, the makers of money have the most perfect security that their goods will not be the worse for keeping; and the great warehouse in Threadneedle-street, where they are accustomed to deposit their surplus stock, is not only guarded against all accidents that befal other manufactures, but has this singular property, that the goods deposited increase in bulk and value without any visible aid. Still, if it should be thought that to manufacture an article which is not destined for the market, is an instance of industry without advantage; and a way to turn manufacturers into a sort of *amateurs* rather than professional men; the objection may be answered by observing that, although the goods are in many cases warehoused for a very long time, a market is at length found. In most cases, immediately on the death of the senior manufacturer, the junior partners of his firm bring

the whole to market, and that with the greatest success in disposing of their goods. It has often been observed, that a quantity so great as to have taken an industrious manufacturer all his life to accumulate, has been got rid of with the greatest ease in less than a year.

This, I know, will appear very surprising to persons who are not acquainted with the state of the markets in this great metropolis, where heavy articles of the kind mentioned may be disposed of for a mere trifle, and in the shortest possible space of time. The purchasers, in such cases, are a particular description of persons, who prefer money ready made to the trouble of making it themselves: and even they are subject to so many fluctuations that, in the course of a day, they have been known to exchange the character of buyer and seller, payer and receiver, perhaps an hundred times.

The mention of this last species of dealers brings to my recollection that, although the making of money differs in many respects from some trades, yet to others it bears a very close resemblance, and perhaps in nothing more than the various projects introduced of late years to shorten labour, by the employment of machinery. This, in the case of the manufac-

ture of money, is by some reckoned an innovation; but it is my business to state facts. Undoubtedly the making of money was formerly a tedious operation: it was accounted an honest and very industrious business; but since the introduction of machinery, the end has been somehow or other produced in a space of time so short as to appear very suspicious.

As there is much secrecy preserved in the use and construction of the machinery by which money is made, it is not in my power to give a very clear description of it. There are many secret springs and movements not to be understood without a trial, which is rather expensive. That the whole is very ingenious we cannot doubt. I have been assured by gentlemen conversant in these machines, that the manufacture of an immense sum of money, which may be completed in a few hours, will often hinge upon a small movement, imperceptible to every eye that has not studied it; and that the motions of the whole are so rapid as to be almost invisible to all but the manufacturer. The operation of carding is described as being very curious, and the use of horses has greatly facilitated the labour, when it becomes necessary to make money out of lands and houses. There are several manufactories

established at Newmarket, Epsom, and some other parts of the kingdom, where the whole is performed by horses, and where effects are produced which the inhabitants of London, with all their boasted town-made articles, cannot pretend to rival. On the other hand, in the metropolis, there is a very large concern of this kind established, worked by a different species of machinery, which they call *stocks.* In other manufactures, it is usual to state the number of hands employed, but here the principal operation is done by heads; which for that purpose are carefully emptied of the accustomed contents, and filled with battles, sieges, sea-fights, treaties, and embassies, which are regularly changed every day, or oftener as may be wanted. One objection against our common manufactures, that they are hurtful to health, is said to be obviated here, where sitting is carefully avoided, and lying preferred as an easier posture, and that in which more work can be done in a given time. With this exception, however, I do not conceive that, in point of health, this manufacture has superior advantages. From constantly lying in one position, many of them become lame, and some so deaf as to be unable to answer to their names.

With respect, however, to that description of manufacturers chiefly intended in this paper, those who are continually making the article without bringing it to market, or delay the bringing it to market until they are prevented by death, their character must be considered as very singular, and not to be paralleled in the case of any other manufacturers. What should we think of a maker of linens who should fill his warehouses from time to time, with no other view than to look on them now and then, count the bales, and amuse himself with the thoughts that one day or other he would bring them into use; but in the mean time feel miserable if a few yards were to be requested of him for any necessary or benevolent purpose? If such a man in answer should plead that the making of money differs from every other article, it will be necessary for him to state wherein that difference lies, or whether there is, in truth, any difference between one useless article and another.

These persons are nevertheless entitled to some degree of compassion. After having for so many years fixed their affections on a species of amusement which they must quit, and being utterly unacquainted with any higher pleasure than that of surveying the growing

bulk of their article, it is really somewhat hard to be removed into a state of existence where, according to the best authorities, no such thing is permitted, or even known, as making of money. It is much to be regretted that our new philosophers, when, some years ago, they were proving how wrong we had been in all our notions as to a future state, did not provide some state or other which might form a continuation of the present, and in which our favourite pursuits might go on without any material interruption. As things are at present, and without the smallest probability of any new heaven of this sort, we ought not to refuse some small share of pity to those who have been so unfortunate as to employ their whole lives in making money, for themselves to count, and for their successors to spend. If we add to this the important sacrifices necessary in order to carry on this manufacture, the loss of reputation, the many privations the manufacturer is subject to, and the total absence of enjoyment or satisfaction, we may surely conclude that there are few human beings who have so strangely mistaken what themselves were made for, or have so grossly miscalculated the profit and loss upon the labours of their lives.

It having been asserted above that the article which is the subject of this paper does not suffer by keeping, it may be necessary to add that, although this be true so far as respects money itself, yet if long pent up it frequently affects the possessors in a very unpleasant manner. Even their bodies have been known to be injured by it, and it has been ascertained that they have suffered diseases similar in appearance to those which affect persons who cannot command the means of a generous diet. But it goes farther, and brings on a train of disorders with which the poor are unacquainted; restlessness, anxiety, narrowness, and other complaints about the chest, and a general contraction of all that in other men is expanded and liberal. Whether all this arises from pernicious effluvia in the article, or from some defect in the constitution of the patient, I shall leave to the determination of the faculty. I have only to add, that the appearances on dissection have generally exhibited a moderate proportion of brains, a great deficiency of heart, and no bowels.

THE PROJECTOR. No 3.

"Words are like leaves, and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found." POPE.

August 1807.

The celebrated Mr. Locke, in his chapter on the signification of words, has laid down a position which few will be inclined to dispute, namely, that words are often used without signification. But it may not be unnecessary to add the reason he assigns for this singular practice: "Though the proper and immediate signification of words," says that great Philosopher, "are ideas in the mind of the speaker, yet because, by familiar use from our cradles, we come to learn certain articulate sounds very perfectly, and have them readily on our tongues, and always at hand in our memories, but yet are not always careful to examine, or settle their significations perfectly; it often happens that men, even when they would apply themselves to an attentive consideration, do set their thoughts more on words than

things. Nay, because words are many of them learned before the ideas are known for which they stand; therefore some, not only children, but men, speak several words no otherwise than parrots do, only because they have learned them, and have been accustomed to those sounds."

Whether owing to these causes, or more probably to others which have occurred since the days of Mr. Locke, it is certain that a great many words are used in our language without signification, and that considerable pains appear to have been taken to render words, which, according to our Dictionaries, have some meaning when taken separately, quite insignificant when combined together. That this is not done without pains and trouble my readers will readily believe, when they consider that the effect cannot be produced unless by persons who have a great command of words, or a great stock ready at hand, which they can discharge upon the hearer. Hence a long speech has generally been found to contain less meaning than a short sentence; and so wary is the world become on this subject, that men who wish to have any matter clearly explained are always in dread of a multitude of words, and conceive that the eagerness of a

speaker to deceive them is in exact proportion to the length of his harangue.

Hence, perhaps, we may divide all the words of our language into two classes, the one, and the smaller, consisting of those which have a meaning, and the other, and by far the largest, consisting of that vast combination which we call WORDS OF COURSE. As the first of these classes requires very little elucidation, I shall pass on to a few remarks on the second, or WORDS OF COURSE, the use of which appears to me to be growing every day more general, and therefore one would be inclined to suppose more necessary in social intercourse.

It might be a curious speculation to trace WORDS OF COURSE to their origin, and endeavour to discover whether they are of pure English growth, or imported from any other nation. It is, I think, allowed that very few of the productions for which our country is at present famous are of our own growth, and that we have only had the merit of importing and bringing them to a higher state of perfection than they could have attained under less skilful management in their native soil. Perhaps WORDS OF COURSE may be one of those articles which, after a series of years, we have thought proper to naturalize, and admit to all

the privileges of indigenous productions. On this conjecture, for I throw it out merely as a conjecture, it is not improbable that WORDS OF COURSE were originally imported by some persons of high rank, and the use of them at first confined to crowned heads, or representatives of crowned heads, commonly called ambassadors. It is certain that in our negotiations for at least a century past we find a very copious display of WORDS OF COURSE, and even at the present day we find letters between the personages alluded to, besprinkled with expressions of "high consideration," and "most perfect consideration, submission, attachment, &c." which are avowedly WORDS OF COURSE.

Along with this mode of importation, we may also conjecture that persons of fashion travelling on the Continent for pleasure, or what is commonly called improvement, would not neglect to lay in a stock of the newest WORDS OF COURSE, because such words are to them of much more importance than to other classes of men. It is a point confessed, that the greater part of their social intercourse is carried on by means of words "which," says Mr. Locke, "they speak no otherwise than parrots do, only because they have learned

them, and have been accustomed to those sounds."

Now if this account of the introduction amongst us of WORDS OF COURSE be allowed to be historically just, we cannot find it very difficult to explain the descent of these words from the upper to the lower classes of society. In what way other nations are to trace the rise and progress of their WORDS OF COURSE may be left to their antiquaries, who will be either anxious to claim the honour, or to avoid the shame of introducing them, according to the value they are pleased to put upon them. I may, however, remark, as a matter somewhat surprizing, that the use of WORDS OF COURSE, which are certainly to be found in all modern languages, should not long ere now have facilitated the acquisition of such languages by young learners. It has generally been thought that the main impediment in the learner's way, is the want of a memory capable of retaining the meaning of the words of any language which he may wish to acquire. But surely, at first sight, it appears that such a difficulty must be speedily removed by the use of WORDS OF COURSE: for what can be more easy than to learn a language the words of which have no meaning, and are to be repeated "no other-

wise than parrots do?" Yet, however obvious this facility may appear, such is the nature of WORDS OF COURSE, that I am confidently assured by many able speakers, they are acquired with more difficulty and with more sacrifices than any other words. They tell me that a man must be considerably advanced in life before he can use them with readiness, and that he must have acquired a great many other qualities before he can use them with effect; to say nothing of the natural tendency they have to perplex what should be perspicuous, and to prolong what should be dispatched.

But in whatever way WORDS OF COURSE have been introduced, it is sufficient for the present purpose that we find them in very general use; that they are employed not only in courts but cities, not only in assemblies but in shops, and mix in the greater part of the intercourse of mankind, from a promise of promotion to an invitation to dinner. When a great man assures his dependant that he may be certain he will provide for him the first opportunity, when he hopes that he shall see him often, and professes that he has his interest very much at heart; when a fine lady expresses her infinite concern that she is deprived of the honour of another fine lady's

company; that she laments the very bad cold which occasions this disappointment, and shall not have another wink of sleep until assured that her dear friend is perfectly recovered; these are, in general, WORDS OF COURSE. The great man has no more concern about his dependant's interest than if he had never seen him; and the fine lady's sleep is as sound and long, as if fatigue or opium had procured it.

In trade, WORDS OF COURSE are considered as of great service. In borrowing money, or in delaying the payment of it, they are found exceedingly useful; and consist, generally, of unexpected disappointments, of extreme regret and sorrow, with a very long dissertation on the hardness of the times, the slackness of trade, and other matters, which are so perfectly understood to be WORDS OF COURSE, that he who is offended at them to-day will not hesitate to employ them to-morrow; and, although he cannot reasonably expect that another should be less acquainted with their no-meaning than himself, yet he employs them mechanically; they fill up the moments of suspense and expectation, they divert questions and importunities, and, if they do not yield satisfaction, at least they procure delay.

If we pass from trade to affairs of a more

tender nature, to affairs of courtship, I am afraid we shall find that the Dictionary of Love consists, in a great measure, of WORDS OF COURSE. For this, perhaps, we may find a reason not so applicable in the other cases of which we have been speaking. The vast multitude of books in which the various arts of courtship are taught, has reduced the whole to an easy system, so soon learned, that the young reader is often master of his lesson before he has ever thought to whom he shall repeat it. I am not, however, so averse to WORDS OF COURSE in affairs of gallantry, as in other cases. One who respects the amiable character of his fair countrywomen, can scarcely wish that the words employed to gain their affection should have any meaning. If this, indeed, were the case, what would a beauty be but a murderer, carrying about with her deadly weapons wherever she goes; now breaking a heart into a thousand pieces, then piercing it through with darts till it resembles the man in the Almanack, and those darts shot from her eyes? At other times she is represented as scorching her lovers in flames, driving them to the blackness of despair, or plunging them in a species of infernal regions; all which, for the honour of the sex, we must hope are only

WORDS OF COURSE. It would, perhaps, be much for the interest of our beauties, if they were to understand such words in this way, and be under no apprehension lest the lovers who declare they cannot live but in their presence, should depart this life in their absence. They should recollect that it is peculiar to those who employ WORDS OF COURSE to mean something the very opposite to what they express; and it is certain that many of them, amidst the agonies of despair, and with no other prospect before them than hanging, poisoning, starving, or drowning, have been known to dance merrily at a ball, and enjoy a very comfortable night's rest after eating a hearty supper.

WORDS OF COURSE are used for so many various purposes, and those purposes so artfully concealed, that it is not easy to reduce them into classes, assigning to each rank of persons the class which belongs to them. In general, if we examine them attentively, and endeavour to trace them, we shall find that they consist either of words that have changed their meaning by a long course of time, or have no meaning at all. Perhaps the greater part are words which had once a meaning, although they are now merely WORDS OF COURSE,

and, in order to be certain whether they have undergone this change, it is only necessary we should have some knowledge of the person who uses them.

Of words which are now WORDS OF COURSE, although they once had, and may still now and then have a meaning, our catalogue is rather larger than those who profess a regard for sincerity and plain-dealing could wish. In this list may be comprized many of the Oaths which are administered in certain public offices; a great many of the harangues which are uttered in the ears of the populace on election occasions, and in which the meaning, as was already hinted, is studiously obscured by a multitude of WORDS OF COURSE. In this list also may be comprized a considerable part of the marriage service in the Book of Common Prayer, together with no small share of the Litany, &c. in the same. And that this may not be a matter disguised from the hearers, they are often read in publick with a tone and accent which would be thought very disrespectful if used in the case of a newspaper. I may add one other class, that of words which are sincere when first uttered; but become WORDS OF COURSE after a short period. Of this kind are many of the promises made in

cases of embarrassment, and of the resolutions formed during a fit of sickness.

These are a few of the instances in which WORDS OF COURSE are generally employed; and it only remains to be inquired, whether they are not used more frequently than is proper; and whether, upon the whole, any very great benefit results from stripping words of their accustomed meaning; and such questions, I trust, I may very safely leave to the determination of my readers. But although I take for granted that they will object to the extension and continuance of WORDS OF COURSE, I cannot flatter them that such an opinion, however strongly expressed, will produce the change wanted. In the mean time, therefore, and while certain persons of all ranks think it proper to make use of WORDS OF COURSE, it is my business, as a PROJECTOR for the general good, to suggest an expedient by which great trouble and many disappointments may be avoided. This is nothing more than that some ingenious person, particularly learned in WORDS OF COURSE, will compile a Dictionary of them; not with the original meanings, but with the latest meanings affixed; and specifying also all those words and phrases which have no meaning at all. The latter part of

this Lexicon would certainly save a great deal of trouble; as I have known a person exceedingly puzzled to find out the meaning of a speech addressed to him, who would have avoided all his pains, anxiety, and even expence, if he had been candidly told it had no meaning at all.

THE PROJECTOR. N° 74.

——"Vitanda est improba Siren
DESIDIA; aut, quidquid vita meliore parâsti
Ponendum æquo animo." HOR.

"Learn the siren IDLENESS to shun,
Or poorly be content to lose the fame
Which your past hours of better life might claim."
FRANCIS.

September 1807.

MUCH has been said against Idleness by my ingenious predecessors. They have represented it as not only an evil, but the cause of many other evils, as more destructive than the plague, and as degrading to the nature of man. But

it being a great object with me in these my lucubrations to conciliate the good opinions of all parties, I shall beg leave to consider Idleness rather as a misfortune than a fault; and in truth, if we look attentively to its whole progress, and its usual consequences, I know not whether we ought not to rank it amongst the greatest misfortunes which can befal the human race.

During my first thoughts on the subject, I was disposed to view Idleness as a disease, and there seemed some good reasons for referring it to the jurisdiction of the faculty. Its approaches are known to be slow and imperceptible in many instances, resembling those diseases which gradually prey on the constitution, but so gently that the patient no sooner discovers his disorder than he finds that it is past remedy. We hear likewise of persons being attacked with *fits* of idleness, more or less short or violent, according to certain circumstances. Men in business seem to be most liable to these fits, and are known to suffer very severely when they last long; but that they do not consider them as a disease, appears from what happens when the fits have recurred very frequently, or continued for a long period. In this case, instead of applying to a consultation of physi-

cians, they have been known to call a meeting of their creditors. Had not these and other circumstances diverted me from considering Idleness as a disease, I was about to have classed it among those dangerous epidemics that are produced by hot weather, oblige the patients to fly from home in quest of cool air at the sea-side; and which are observed to rage in this country, principally from the commencement of the dog-days to about the end of October.

But, upon more mature deliberation, I have been induced to view Idleness as one of those misfortunes for which a generous and humane publick often interests itself, and studies to procure suitable relief. Under such circumstances, it would ill become one who is a PROJECTOR by trade, to omit a grievance of so great magnitude, and of which so many striking instances may be seen in all the ranks of life. I am the more disposed to take this matter in hand, as not only the language of common conversation, but even that of the Law, bestows epithets upon certain classes of the Idle, which, to say the least, are not very respectful. For example, our Laws speak of idle persons and vagabonds, as being identically the same; but if such language as this be per-

mitted in the case of the poor, to whom I think it is generally applied, who can say whether it may not be applied with equal propriety to persons of higher rank, who happen to be idle? Who can say, whether some sturdy moralist, or implacable interpreter of the Laws, may not discover vagabonds in coaches, and idle persons in curricles, phaëtons, and barouches? And this is the more to be apprehended, because, philosophically considered, there is very little difference between one kind of idleness and another; between, for example, the idleness of him who is led to pick a pocket by manual dexterity in Smithfield, and of him who produces the same effect by a throw of the dice in St. James's-street.

In investigating the causes of Idleness, there may be much difference of opinion. There are, however, at least two causes about which there can be no dispute, Time and Money. But while we see very clearly that these operate in producing the misfortune which is the subject of this paper, it is certainly not very easy to say why they should do so. Moralists are perpetually telling us of the shortness of Time, and calculators are no less eager to demonstrate the value of Money. But it is evident from the practice of the indolent, that *their* time is so

long that they know not what to do with it, and their money of so little value that they are never happy (if persons labouring under this misfortune can be said to be happy at all) but when they are devising contrivances to get rid of it. Here, therefore, seems to be much contradiction of principles, which I shall not at present endeavour to reconcile, it being sufficient for my purpose that the misfortune of Idleness is acknowledged to arise, principally, from the excess of Time or Money, above the quantities of each that are necessary for existence.

Having then discovered the cause, we may proceed to the remedy; and this seems to be a matter for the serious consideration of a humane publick. Some have, if I mistake not, proposed an hospital for the idle; but, besides that this implies somewhat of a disease, in which light, for the reasons already assigned, I cannot consider Idleness, it would be improper in another point of view, confinement being an aggravation of every species of Idleness, and, according to the familiar expression, would "render the cure worse than the disease."

My plan is of another kind. Since it is found that Idleness cannot be absolished by force of

law, or any other force that has hitherto been applied, and far less by the gentle methods of persuasion, owing to the extreme impatience of the hearer, I would propose the establishment of a college, or institution (a more fashionable word), in which idleness might be taught in all its branches by Professors duly qualified for the same, and who, I doubt not, might be procured from some of the learned professions already in vogue. It is the peculiar misfortune of the persons in whose behalf I am pleading, that, with every sincere attachment to the principles of Idleness, and with a zeal for indolence which ends only with their lives; they know not how or in what manner to carry such principles into practice. Whether they depend on public amusements or on private amusements, whether they sleep at a play or at a concert, whether they ply the bottle or the cards, there are always some hours, some long hours, which hang heavy on their hands. And even after the best-laid plans for inactivity, and a glorious prospect of a wasted day, a shower of rain has been known to drive them almost to despair.

Another reason for an institution like that I am proposing, is what may likewise be considered as a peculiar misfortune in the case of lazy people. Being subject to the common

frailties of the human race, they have, among others, no small portion of conceit. They think that idleness is a very easy thing to practise; they view it as the opposite of all action, and conceive that when they have once resolved to do nothing, they may enjoy the bliss of inactivity. Now it ought to be one purpose of our new college, to give a course of lectures tending to expose the fallacy of such opinions, and to persuade the idle that they have entered upon a kind of life far more laborious than they have any idea of; and a kind of life which requires the utmost ingenuity to make it endurable. The learned professor may also explain to them, that their ignorance in these points constitutes the great misfortune of their condition, that the proper practice of sloth requires a good deal of preparatory knowledge, and that they cannot be supposed to go about dreaming all their lives without being duly instructed in the art of walking in their sleep. It is surely a most pitiable case to see a man possessed of length of days and of purse, honestly desirous of getting rid of both in the genteelest manner possible, and yet so ignorant and helpless as not to know how to be lazy with a good grace, nor how to turn even a week's sluggishness to a good account.

It must therefore be a leading object in the instructions given at this new academy, to divest the students of all former prejudices in their own favour; and of every foolish conceit, that they can endure the toils and fatigue of Idleness without a due course of precepts upon the subject. It will not be less necessary to eradicate an opinion, which is too prevalent, that some men are born to be idle, that there is in some a genius for Indolence, as there is a genius for poetry, painting, or musick. The case is precisely the reverse; for where there is a genius for the fine arts, it cannot be restrained, nor can it be taught: but there is no such inherent disposition to laziness, and it is very certain that the most worthless and ignorant of mankind may take up the trade of Idleness, and make considerable progress in it, although, for reasons already given, they will be liable to many mistakes if they do not submit to some instructions such as are now proposed. There is, however, an excuse to be made for those who embrace a life of indolence. It is at first so apparently easy that they think it will always remain so. A man who can make a shift to idle away six weeks at a watering-place in the summer, longs for the time when he may retire from business and employ

a whole year, and even many years, in doing nothing. The happy time comes; and the first account we receive of the success of his experiment is from the coroner's jury.

And this, by the way, leads me to remark, that a very useful course of lectures might be given at our new college, on the art and mystery (for such it often is) of Retirement: when a sober citizen makes a sudden transition from doing something to doing nothing; exchanges time that was generally too short for business, for time that is always too long for idleness; and ventures upon the whole of a year, particularly on that unhappy part of it called Winter, without the least knowledge how one hour may be spent. This course of lectures might be illustrated by some well-known instances. My old friend HUMPHREY BUSTLETON occurs to my mind on this occasion. Humphrey determined to leave off business at a proper time, as he called it, about the age of sixty-five, bought a large house, garden and farm, and determined to enjoy himself, and make himself amends for all his fatigues, by commencing a life of complete indolence. About a year after his retirement, some friends obeyed his pressing invitation to visit his mansion; and knowing that beyond the business

of the shop, he had not an idea, nor any inclination to acquire one, they asked him, how he spent his time. To answer this he had no objection:— "Gentlemen, when you know one day, you know all. I get up every morning by day-break, or about six o'clock — always was an early riser — then I walk down the lane to the Fox and Grapes, and there I have a little *purl*, and get into conversation with the farmers' men — come home to breakfast — after breakfast I take a walk again to the Fox and Grapes; by this time the papers are come in, and I read the papers — then I come home, and dress for dinner: — after dinner, as I have nobody but my wife and daughter, and it is lonesome talking with them, I take a walk again to the Fox and Grapes, and have some rum and water, and smoke a pipe with Old Jerry, the landlord — then I come home and have some tea: and in the evening, as one can't stay by oneself, I walk again to the Fox and Grapes, and there I spend the evening with the club — and get home about eleven, when Robert comes with the lanthorn."

To some, this may appear a perfect course of idleness; but, were our college erected, I doubt not but that my friend Humphrey might obtain some instructions that would greatly im-

prove his plan, especially as, of late, a dropsical and rheumatic habit has interrupted his scheme of idleness, and has convinced him of what he was very unwilling to believe, namely, that a time would arrive, a time for which he had made no preparation, when he could neither go to the Fox and Grapes, nor the Fox and Grapes come to him.

But what would be perhaps the most important consideration in the institution of a College for Idlers, is the present unhappy state of amusements. And here there is a wonderful difference of opinion, moralists holding that our amusements are too numerous for the busy; while the persons who are the subjects of this paper contend that they are too few for the idle. Both opinions, however, may be right, although the parties are not likely to unite in removing their respective grievances. But certainly the interests of the indolent and of the trifling seem to require some addition to be made to the pleasurable modes of getting rid of the enemy Time: and it is not a little to the credit of modern ingenuity, that so many additions have lately been made to the stock both of public and private amusement. The hours of meeting, too, are under such wise regulations, that not only the day, but the night

may be idled away very comfortably, and with no other intervals than what are necessary for the delightful rattling over the stones from house to house.

By thus submitting the art of idleness to the judgment of scientific lecturers, and reducing the whole to a regular system, there can be no doubt that the situation of idlers might be considerably improved: and I throw out a proposal for a new College, with perfect confidence that, whether it be carried into execution or not, they will not entertain a worse opinion of the PROJECTOR.

I might, therefore, leave the subject to its fate, were it not requisite to throw out some hint, by which the lovers of Idleness might in the mean time profit. As it is the custom for citizens to retire from business at a certain time of life, for which they are seldom fitted by previous knowledge or resources of mind; perhaps it might not be amiss if those who have followed the trade of idleness were likewise to retire from their fatigues, and try whether there are not employments to be found less laborious, more pleasant, and more useful; and rendered so by a conviction of the shortness and uncertainty of that time, which had hitherto appeared so long and so tiresome.

THE PROJECTOR. No 75.

"The Power of Beauty I remember yet,
Which once inflam'd my soul, and still inspires my wit."
DRYDEN.

October 1807.

A FEW days ago I had the honour to receive the following laconic epistle, which, however, I dare scarcely venture to call "inconsistent with the loquacity of the sex," although my correspondent may think herself entitled to take such a liberty.

"MR. PROJECTOR,

"WE are indebted to you for many excellent papers on general subjects, but which after all principally concern the men. Cannot you find time to give us your thoughts on topicks which more particularly relate to our sex? I presume you are not very old; and if you were, I am sure old fellows are more gallant now-a-days than young ones. — Begin then, and I will give you a subject — What do you think of Beauty?

"You may print this or not, as you please. It is short enough to be inconsistent with the loquacity of the sex to which I belong, and am, Mr PROJECTOR,

"Yours, LETITIA."

Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes: I suspect those correspondents who begin with compliments; and should not be surprised if Letitia has suggested the subject of beauty, to entrap me into discussions that may not be very acceptable. Although not so very old, as she seems to hint in a sly way, I certainly do not find much inclination to talk with those raptures on the subject of beauty which I once felt, and which render opinions so generally acceptable. It is frequently found that lovers and criticks lose a great deal of their enthusiasm for girls and poems when they advance in years, and when they are not so fit for addressing the one, or relishing the other, as they were in their more lively days. On the other hand, however, the absence of enthusiasm affords more scope to judgment, and where there are but few rapturous exclamations, there may be a good deal of sound sense. Without therefore attributing to myself these essential qualities in discussion, I shall endeavour to com-

ply with my correspondent's request, and offer a few cursory remarks on a subject which I neither contemplate as one nearly forgotten, nor venture upon as one of a dangerous and intoxicating nature.

My predecessors have frequently treated this subject, and, in order to speak with more precision, have even attempted to define Beauty; but as I find nothing but confusion and contradictions in all they have handed down to us by way of definition, I shall not repeat their conjectures. This is indeed one of those subjects which may be discussed very amicably without the aid of a definition, because it is what every man understands, or thinks he understands, before he knows what a definition means: and it is what every woman acquires a notion of, the moment she contemplates herself in a looking-glass. A definition therefore is not only useless in the present case, but I humbly conceive might be injurious. If we could exactly tell what form of features, what tint of complexion, what height of stature, and what degree of plumpness constituted Beauty, it is plain that thousands would be excluded, who not only are Beauties in the opinion of their admirers, but even, I am inclined to think, in their own opinion. Without, then, giving

ourselves any more trouble about definitions, let us consider a few of the circumstances which attend the possession of Beauty.

And first I must observe that Beauty is universally attractive; but this is an observation so very trite, that I should have been ashamed to write it down, if I had not meant to follow it by censuring the barren invention of the admirers of beauty, who have no other means of praising its attractions than by comparing them to the force of the magnet. Will they plead that they have a latent meaning for this figure, and intend to insinuate that some of the beaux who are attracted by beauty, are really of not more value than the pins and needles by which experimental philosophers show us the power of the loadstone?

The attraction of beauty is so generally allowed, that I think, in the space of six thousand years and upwards, no writer has been found hardy enough to deny it; if we except certain metaphorical reasoners, of the rhyming tribe, who affect to prefer wine to women, and have written some very jovial persuasives to that opinion, which are usually sung with great solemnity and effect in our taverns. That this, however, is a false taste, the majority are agreed; and I am inclined to think that in

some it arises more from disappointment than feeling, and that others, who profess to be of this way of thinking, are of that class who prefer cheap pleasures, and have not any other reason for courting the charms of the bottle than because it requires no qualifications but those of which they are easily masters.

" Although it has been found both difficult and inconvenient to attempt any definition of Beauty, we may be allowed to consider a little in what it consists, or where it resides. We have had many disputes as to the seat of the soul, and the seat of honour; and it surely cannot be less important to discover the seat of Beauty, to prevent that purblind creature Man from making mistakes. But here, too, I am aware that we shall meet with many difficulties. The seat of Beauty is not laid down with so much geographical precision as one would expect, considering that it is the object of such general pursuit. It has changed its position, in my remembrance, four or five times; and I do not think, according to the most authentic accounts, that it has been stationary above ten years together for the last two centuries. I can remember that the seat of Beauty was once thought to be in the face; from that it mounted nearly a foot higher than the head; it then

descended in a fine flowing line, and hung gracefully over the shoulders; from which it disappeared so suddenly that the greatest beauties appeared to have taken an invincible dislike to hair. A few years ago, it seemed to have taken up its residence in the ancles; and thence it arose to the waist, from which with much difficulty it was dislodged by the wits and the caricaturists, assisted, in some measure, by the very reverend the clergy (who were tantalized by the prospect of mock-christenings). About three or four years ago, it quitted all these situations for the bosom, from whence it was again driven by the persecution of wit and decency, and by a sudden jerk fixed itself in the elbows and shoulders, where at present it seems to have acquired a tolerably quiet residence. How long this may last, is doubtful, as there are already symptoms of long sleeves, which threaten another removal of the seat of Beauty; but to what quarter I cannot presume to conjecture. During these revolutions, our lively neighbours, the French, went a considerable step farther in settling the important question. The French ladies, distrusting their own abilities to determine the seat of Beauty, and confiding in the superior judgment of those who were to be pleased, at once exposed nearly the

whole person — a scheme which was, to say the least, very accommodating, since every lover might choose what he pleased.

Some feeble, but, no doubt, well-meant attempts, were made to introduce this fashion here; but, to the great surprise of the importers, the very persons for whose use and behoof it was tried, were the first to take the alarm, and hoot from society the few who had the courage to make the experiment. Some respect, however, might have been shown to what, we are told, was merely an error in judgment, and to a mode of displaying beauty which must have cost them who tried it many sacrifices of all that is thought valuable, or decorous.

These frequent changes seem, therefore, to intimate that the seat of Beauty is never likely to be fixed — a circumstance from which those who contemplate various ages are apt to draw unfavourable conclusions, yet, perhaps, upon the whole, no great inconveniences can arise. We seldom hear any young man say, "I dislike elbows, and will wait until faces come in fashion." Every age seems content with its own species of Beauty; and the only consequence is, that gentlemen who happened to be smitten with cork rumps will, after some years

of reflection, be apt to think they would have been happier if they had lived in an age of foreheads. Others, now disposed to look a little lower, will chuckle to think that they once lost their hearts to Brutus's. Petty disputes and recriminations may probably take place, but without any very fatal effects, between those who have been captivated by a bosom plain or lappelled, by a cornelian broach or a pearl comb, by Moorish boots or Circassian sleeves; and it may be very harmlessly debated, whether it was wiser to be caught by the curls which Nature has given, or those which the ingenious Mr. Ross has sold.

These remarks lead to the consideration of a circumstance pertaining to Beauty, which has occasionally been noticed by writers on the subject, but not very fully discussed — I mean, the imperfection of Beauty. It appears, that while we allow Nature to have considerable powers in making many very sublime and conspicuous objects, such as rocks, mountains, rivers, and other things very much praised by poets and travellers, she generally fails in producing Beauty in the human form. This opinion may to some appear very singular; but it is amply confirmed by the many expedients contrived to improve her manufacture, and that,

not only where there seems to be room for improvement, but where the most nice and curious eye can [illegible] defect. Some of these expedients [illegible] been hinted at, I shall close the subject with remarking that in certain cases the improvers have not always been so successful as the pains they take seem to deserve; and that in other instances they have so totally mistaken the original ideas of the architect, as to create a strange mixture of beauty and deformity, and of decays and repairs, and really make it doubtful whether the edifice is new or old, substantial or tottering.

The contest between Art and Nature in this affair has so long been carried on, that the oldest person now living cannot remember to have ever heard of a peace, or even an armistice. There is, however, a difference worth pointing out in the spirit and disposition of the parties. Nature acts entirely on the defensive; the war, therefore, on her part is just and necessary, and her friends may pray for the success of her arms with unfeigned ardour. The same cannot be said of Art, which plays the part of an invader and usurper, under the base pretence of being an ally and an auxiliary; and I would recommend to those who choose this side, to reflect how much mischief such a

war must occasion, and to remain constant to the politicks of Nature, until such time as the parties shall enter into a treaty of peace, and mark out the precise boundaries of each.

There are some writers who have questioned whether Beauty is not often a misfortune. Without entering very deeply into this question, we may at least say, that it is a misfortune which many bear with great fortitude, and are not only unwilling to alleviate by any means in their power, but are extremely sorry to find it lessened by causes over which they have no command. How long it lasts, is another question, which I find discussed in the writings of some of my predecessors, but which I would wish to touch with all possible delicacy. The exact duration, I think, has never been ascertained. I have known it to go as far as seventy years, and I doubt not but that persons of more experience may have seen it to last much longer. There can be no dispute, therefore, about its being a permanent article; every rout, opera, and ball, shows it; but whether it be exactly the same as to quality, and whether it preserves its attractions for so many years undiminished, is a point upon which there are various opinions. Some have resolved it by addressing permanent beauties in the Jesuitical language, *Crede quod*

habes, et habes—"Believe that you have it, and you have it;" an advice which they presume to think is very efficacious, but which others think very unnecessary.

We have been told lately that Beauty will be rendered more general by the introduction of the Vaccine Inoculation, and I am old enough to remember that much the same assertion was made on the introduction of the Small Pox Inoculation. Now, without objecting to remedies by which the lives of thousands will be preserved to their friends and their country, it may yet be doubted whether Beauty will be rendered more general than it was before. The oldest among us cannot remember the time when those who are most interested in the possession of Beauty complained of the want of it, or even thought themselves deficient. I know that men and mirrors have been subpœnaed to prove the contrary; but men in various cases are very improper judges, and the evidence of mirrors is so soon softened down, that we very rarely hear of any of them being broke for cowardice in deserting their mistresses at the engagement of the toilet. And surely nothing can be more comfortable than this universal consciousness of the possession of Beauty; all the regret is, that it should ever be disturbed

by the opinions of by-standers, or the want of money. Of the latter it may be truly said, that of all artifices by which beauty is created and charms heightened, there are none so truly efficacious at all times and occasions, and in all ages, even the most advanced, as the three *per cent.* consolidated annuities.

Before concluding this paper, I may advert to a species of Beauty which many ladies seem to prefer, which is of a very singular kind, but of which I am enabled to speak with tolerable certainty, from being personally acquainted with some of those who possess it. If I might express it in one word, I should be inclined to call it Invisible Beauty, seen at least only by those who have some portion of discernment, and though not concealed by any artful means, yet never courting the applause that is conveyed by a stare, or through a glass. It may be best described by negatives: It depends not on any of the circumstances detailed above: It lies under no obligation to those admirable patterns of Beauty, Medusa and Brutus. It owns no obligations to the length or shortness of waists, to pads, or cork rumps. No part of it is to be purchased in the shops. There is not a milliner, mantua-maker, hair-dresser, or jeweller, that deals in any one article of which

it is composed; and notwithstanding this, it is far more lasting than any of the beauties which they disperse with such kind and profuse variety. It is valuable too on another account: It is infectious — I have known it go through large families of young ladies; a circumstance attended with this inconvenience only, that it renders an admirer's choice a little more difficult; but surely the risk is diminished when the power of making a wrong choice is taken away. And it has another advantage, which ought to recommend it to persons of moderate incomes. Although more highly valued than any of the kinds of Beauty of which we have been speaking, it is by far the cheapest, and will not only keep good in all weathers and climates, but "in all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth, and at the hour of death."

THE PROJECTOR. No. 76.

" Their tribe, trade, trinkets, I defy them all,
With every work of 'Pothecary's Hall." DRYDEN.

November 1807.

IN one of the late Foreign Journals, we are informed that Mr. Lichtenthal, a learned German, has published a work in which he proposes to cure all diseases by Musick. I am sorry that the interruption occasioned by the war to the Continental trade prevents my giving my readers a more particular account of this important work. If Mr. Lichtenthal has proved the excellence of his plan only in theory, he surely deserves to be better known to the world; but, at the same time, his success may perhaps have a tendency to prolong the embargo laid by France upon all trade to England; for if our enemy can keep from us such a book as Mr. Lichtenthal's, we cannot be surprized if he should imagine it will afford him the means of compelling us to agree to a negotiation upon his own terms.

My readers, I hope, will do me the justice to allow that I have ever been as anxious to bring forward the Projects of other persons as my own. I have afforded no reason to suspect me of jealousy, or of any wish, secret or otherwise, to suppress the many excellent plans with which the PROJECTORS of the Continent are daily favouring the world. I have already sounded the praises of one or two ingenious Frenchmen; and with equal zeal I am disposed to give all due tribute to an invention of such importance as the art of curing diseases by Musick. If, in performing this liberal duty, I shall be found a little sceptical on some points, I hope my readers will not attribute that to any defects in Mr. Lichtenthal's plan, but merely to the circumstance already noticed; namely, that I have not yet had an opportunity of perusing his book.

Of the *utility* of his plan no person can for a moment entertain any doubt, who considers the present state of diseases and medicine in this country. Notwithstanding the learning and ingenuity of the English Faculty, aided by every kind of lectures and experience, it cannot be denied that many disorders continue to baffle their skill; and that of those which they are able to cure, some are very obstinate, and in

others the process of cure is tedious and painful. It is equally obvious, that the medicines now adopted, notwithstanding all the means used to sweeten them to the palate, and to colour them to the eye, are both in taste and operation far less agreeable than common food, not to speak of the luxuries of a well-covered table. Let it be added too, that sick persons are often peevish and refractory, and more ready to retard than promote their cure; that Physicians are sometimes impatient, and Apothecaries a little careless or ignorant; and, all these things considered, I think it cannot be doubted that any new mode of curing disorders must be highly acceptable.

Next to the *utility* of this plan, it comes very strongly recommended by the *easiness* with which it may be introduced into this country. Although it will certainly occasion a total revolution in our medical system; although it will render the College of Physicians, and Apothecaries' Hall, quite useless; yet I have no doubt that a liberal Parliament will have no objection to vote a compensation to such persons as can prove they have suffered by it. On the other hand, let us only consider what facilities the present state of our country affords to the introduction of Mr. Lich-

tenthal's project. We are not only provided with a great variety of diseases that will enable us to prove its efficacy; but we have likewise all the Materia Medica, all the medicines necessary in physical cases, and all the instruments adapted to surgical ones. Never, perhaps, was the country so amply stored with musical remedies. Not a house but is provided with a piano, a harpsichord, a guitar, or a harp. Not a sale of the furniture of the lowest tradesman without one or other of these medicines; and it was therefore with more meaning than he intended, that an eminent dealer lately told me, "Piano-fortes are now a mere *drug*."

It has, indeed, been objected by some writers on education, that young ladies are too frequently taught musick; and that it is introduced in all schools as a necessary branch of education. It is forgot that a natural genius only can prevent scholars from exposing themselves before company, which they are invited to do by their indulgent parents, who know nothing of the art, and have no ear to distinguish discords from concords. All this may be true; and, if we had no better prospects from the education of the rising generation, it might yet be a source of complaint. But when

we look at Musick with the ingenious and discerning eye of Mr. Lichtenthal, we shall be less apt to think that our daughters have thrown away their time. What they are now acquiring merely to please the ear, may in time cure the body; the fine shake which their master has taken so much pains to teach, may shorten the fit of an ague: an *adagio* may set a gouty father to sleep, and a *capricio* may operate successfully on the nerves of a valetudinary mother; and who would not prefer the enchanting *Da Capo* of his beautiful daughter or niece, to the nauseous *repetatur haustus* of a physician or apothecary?

But such students of the healing art must, after all, confine their skill to "Domestic Medicine," and be the little BUCHANS of their families. Much dependence cannot be placed on them in a general way, nor have we occasion to lament this circumstance. If diseases are to be cured by medicine, perhaps there never was a time when we could boast of more eminent practitioners. Let our public concerts speak both for the number and skill of our musical performers; and, if there be truth in Mr. Lichtenthal's system, it is evident that we shall excel as much in the new as we did in the old mode of curing diseases. The Opera will then

take precedence of the College of Physicians, and our Concert-rooms will be schools as eminent as Leyden or Edinburgh. Perhaps, indeed, when this system is introduced, and sick people can be cured for a mere song, it may be proper to turn these public places into hospitals, where solos and single songs may be administered to the individual, and the full crash of a double orchestra may be successfully applied to a complication of disorders, or to an epidemic. And what renders this part of the scheme not improbable, is the effect which is sometimes observed at concerts, and particularly at Oratorios. There, after a certain time, I have seen the most restless part of the audience, evidently affected by painful motions and struggles, and at last yawn, and drop into a gentle slumber. We may perceive too, from this instance, that the phraseology of medicine would not be much altered by our new system, as the patient may very properly be said to have taken a dose; and all the difference between the old and the new practitioners would be, that the one compounds and the other composes his medicines.

Prepared, therefore, as we are for the adoption of Mr. Lichtenthal's system, it is much to be regretted that we must remain for some time

longer in the dark, as to the detail of his wonderful discovery. We know not, at present, whether he attaches the effect to the instrument, or to the musick performed; whether the operation depends on the fiddle, flute, hautboy; or on the song, solo, or concerto, by whatever instrument played. Sometimes I am inclined to think that he depends for a cure on the instrument. The sharp tones of the violin seem to have some connexion with the twinges of certain disorders: the double-drum may be efficacious in lethargic cases: and there is an audible connexion between the notes of the bassoon and the effect of very useful medicines. But, perhaps, it is more probable that our great improver has composed pieces of musick for fevers, asthmas, rheumatism, &c. to be played by skilful hands. We have heard one piece of musick which imitates thunder, rain, and all the circumstances of a storm; and another which is calculated to give a very lively idea of a battle. Perhaps Mr. Lichtenthal may have taken a hint from these, and has learned to compose a fever, so as to conduct the hearer from the *prestissimo* pulse, to the *andante* and the *largo*; and through all the stages of the violent *fortissimo*, to the gentle *diminuendo*, that ends in perfect health. But this, it must

be confessed, is merely a conjecture, and a conjecture attended with many difficulties. Let it suffice us therefore, to wait patiently until the great reformer has divulged his plan.

In the mean time, it has been suggested to me, that he may have derived it from an accurate observation of human nature. It has been often remarked that Musicians are long livers, which affords a presumption that they are invested with some means of averting disorders, and what can that be unless their crotchets and quavers? We are likewise told that musick has already been successfully applied in curing the bite of the tarantula; but the following instance, which I found lately in an old book, is yet more in favour of Mr. Lichtenthal's scheme. A gentleman, whose profession was musick, was seized with a fever, which, on the seventh day, brought on a delirium, during which he requested of his physician that he might be permitted to have a little concert in his chamber. This was granted; and, before the first strain was played, his countenance became placid and serene, &c. and his fever abated. The moment, however, the musick ceased, all his disorders returned with the same violence as before; the remedy was again applied with equal success, and mu-

sick was found to be so necessary, that his kinswoman, who sat up with him, was not only obliged to sing, but to *dance*. In short, by repeating the musick, he was completely cured.—This must be allowed to be highly in favour of our PROJECTOR'S scheme; but the case is not perhaps quite in point. I wish the patient had not been a musician by trade, a circumstance which makes the experiment less decisive; as we may often observe that musick produces an effect on professional gentlemen somewhat different from what it produces on their hearers.

It would be very desirable to collect the opinions of the Faculty on this approaching revolution in the healing art. They are men of well-known liberality, and some of them by no means averse to trying experiments. Yet the expected change of system is so great in the present instance, that I am afraid they will not at first look kindly on it, nor be willing to exchange their fees and their rank in Warwick-lane, for a seat in the orchestra, or the chance of a benefit. And on the other hand, I am not quite certain that our musicians will be very eager to exchange places with the faculty. Their emoluments are at present so great, that it may be doubted whether any of them would

give a fiddlestick for the place of a physician. Yet they may in their new vocation enjoy some advantages peculiar to themselves. They are already admitted into the private and confidential parties of persons of fashion, and have many opportunities of studying their disorders. They are also not unfrequently called in to drown the shrieks and exclamations of persons afflicted with the diseases of the card table, and may improve their skill by the imagery of gambling-*flats* and *sharps*.

But whatever reluctance any of the parties concerned in this revolution may show to promote it, individual interests must give way to the general good. If Mr. Lichtenthal can prove that all diseases may be cured by musick, there is no man who will be mad enough to be sick while he is within the sound of a fiddle. Besides the pleasure of this new mode of cure, which will give it a decided superiority over the old, much expence may be avoided in our new Materia Medica. Here is nothing that is perishable, nothing that is wasted. The same instruments and the same compositions may be applied in a thousand cases, without losing their original powers. The longest-lived practitioner will not wear out a genuine Cremona, even if he attends an hospital; and a

small supply of cat-gut can be no object to one who has played himself into a chariot. Imagination, indeed, furnishes so many delightful prospects from the art of curing diseases by this medicine, that it is impossible to listen to trifling objections. What pieces will be most frequently employed, Mr. Lichtenthal only knows. Some patients will, no doubt, recover with all the rapidity of a jig, while others will mend in minuet-time. A slight indisposition may be removed by a single air, while a more obstinate case may require an overture or a concerto. The inclinations of the patient, as in all other cases, must be consulted, or at least not wholly neglected. Country gentlemen, when confined, will experience much relief in a hunting-song: young men of the town will perhaps prefer an Anacreontic, or an old English Derry Down; while they who despise all advice, and choose no will but their own, may be suitably affected by an *Ad Libitum*. Hospital patients will, in general, be content with hand-organs, or hurdy-gurdies, and the poorer sort may be supplied with ballads at their own houses.

Such a revolution as this it is surely delightful to contemplate, and every lover of Projects must wait with impatience for the full ex-

planation of Mr. Lichtenthal's plan. It was my duty as a PROJECTOR and patron of PROJECTORS, to give this early notice of it, and to offer such conjectures on its nature, as may serve to raise the expectations of my readers, and at the same time evince my own impartiality. It will, probably, have to contend with prejudice, but prejudice must give way to public good; and surely the public good will be eminently promoted when our physicians' prescription shall be printed in music types, and we shall have nothing to swallow more nauseous than the words of a modern opera.

THE PROJECTOR. No 77.

—— "Not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom." MILTON.

December 1807.

For some weeks past I have had reason to be alarmed for these my lucubrations. So great a number of new PROJECTORS have started within that time, that, had they proceeded in their various plans, it would have probably been out of my power to retain my situation any longer, as I have no inducements to propose to my readers equal to what they have been pleased to hold forth to their subscribers. I have even received sundry letters from my correspondents, desiring to know to which of the Joint-stock Companies I give the preference. Others have been pleased to express a sort of complimentary surprize that they have not yet seen my name as committee-man, director, or chairman of any of the Projects which hold out the prospect

of procuring the necessaries and luxuries of life for nothing, and being paid for the trouble of consuming them. But my worthy correspondents have surely forgot that, in a very early stage of my PROJECTORATE, I formally disclaimed all connexion with mechanical schemers; and from the experience of the last six weeks, I have certainly had no reason to repent of a determination which enjoins me, as every man ought to be enjoined, to keep within the strict limits of my own province.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, I would not have my readers to suppose that I am less capable of embarking in these vast undertakings than the greater part of the subscribers who have been eager enough to put down their names, and wise enough to make their deposits. Indeed I am not so disposed to depart from the dignity of my predecessors as for a moment to admit that their successor, however unworthy in other respects, might not have made a very good figure as a joint brewer, a joint linen-draper, or a joint wine merchant. On the contrary, I very much question whether the most ingenious of the gentlemen who have made a distinguished figure at the head of these Projects, be absolutely more clever fellows than the least of my predecessors; or whether

as much skill is not necessary to write an essay with genuine wit and humour, as to brew porter with genuine malt and hops. But, however this may be, it is incumbent upon me to inform my correspondents, that I have not the honour to belong to any of the new schemes of which a list, amounting to thirty-nine, now lies before me; and that, whatever amusement or benefit I may be able to contribute in my present progress, I do not conceive that I shall ever have it in my power to inform the publick how they may be fed, clothed, intoxicated, or poisoned, at a cheaper rate than the price current of the markets usually affords. And I am moreover humble enough to hope that there will never be any thing found in my Projects, which may give the Attorney-General occasion to move the Court of King's Bench against me.

But now that I have mentioned the learned Law Officer, I cannot help noticing in what different lights the same subject may strike different persons. I need not mention the light in which Mr. Attorney-General has viewed this matter, nor how he sharpens his indignation by appealing to Acts of Parliament; but to me, the whole, or the greater part of the Projects to which I allude, seem to be part of a curious experiment, alluded to in a former

paper. The object of this experiment I take to be neither more nor less than to institute a *census*, or enumeration of all the fools in the kingdom, and, by throwing out a variety of lures, to divide them into different classes according to their respective weak sides. The experiment, indeed, is not absolutely new: it has been carried on by slow degrees, and perhaps ingenious, though imperfect attempts, or, as the saying is, by fits and starts, at various intervals, ever since the year 1720; such as the woman that was with child of rabbits, the man who was to sing a song in a quart bottle, and the Cock-lane and the Vauxhall ghosts. But I own the original merit of our late attempts lies in combining such a confederacy of deception as might have brought the question to the speediest issue possible, had they not been interrupted by the Crown Lawyers, who seem to have but little relish for such experiments. Still let not those to whom this question is a matter of serious inquiry, be disconsolate because the Attorney General chose to interpose his authority, at a time when the experiment was proceeding upon a grand scale, and might have brought on a very speedy solution. It will always be going on in some quarter or other, were there no other agents

employed than quack-doctors and lottery-office keepers to fill our church-yards and jails.

One principal encouragement which such agents have, is the calculation they always make (and I am afraid upon very accurate principles), that out of an hundred men, not ten, or perhaps five, whatever other profit they may seek after, are at all desirous to profit by EXPERIENCE; and this brings me to the more immediate subject of the present lucubration. "Experience," an old proverb says, "teaches fools," which seems to imply that her's is a very flourishing school; but whether she has altered her plan of education, or is deficient in what all education requires, namely, a suitable and strict discipline; whether she gives too long vacations, or so many holidays that her pupils forget to-day what they were taught yesterday; whether any or all of these be in fault, I know not: but certain it is that her school has very much fallen off in point of reputation, and that many of the scholars, who have paid the highest prices for their education, appear to have been just so much money out of pocket, without any advantage or improvement.

My attention was drawn to this subject from reading in the papers a few days ago that three

or four persons had lost their lives by venturing to skait on the ice in the Park, when it was unfit to bear their weight. Now to one who knows a little of what Experience can tell, it would appear at first sight, that no such accident as this had ever happened before; that the Parks were never left open before on *Sundays* for such experiments; or, perhaps, that these incautious skaiters were so young as neither to know their own weight, nor the strength of the ice. But, upon inquiry, I found that they were persons somewhat advanced in years, that they had heard before of similar accidents, and that if the question had been put to them, they would have unanimously pronounced that a man is in danger of breaking the ice which is unable to bear his weight. Yet so soon are the lessons of Experience forgot, that they had no scruple in appearing novices, where they might have made a much better figure as expert scholars.

Some teachers, aware of the vast expence which attends lessons in the school of Experience, recommend that, instead of going to that school ourselves, we should borrow from those who have been educated there. And this advice is certainly wholesome, as well as antient. An old Poet sweetly sings:

"Learn to be wise from others' harm,
And you shall do full well."

But others are of opinion that this cheap experience never answers the purpose; that it is in this as in matters of luxury, we never set a value upon what is not expensive, and in many instances we have indeed no other criterion of what is excellent or fashionable, but its high price. All this I allow to be true in a certain degree; and there are, no doubt, many persons who have profited by a dear-bought Experience, that would not have prized it much had they either borrowed it, or got it for a trifle. On the other hand, Experience, like every thing else, may be bought too dear, or the purchaser may not have very long time to enjoy his bargain, as when a man happens to be drowned, or to break his neck—events which occur so frequently, that I am afraid, instead of considering them as the lessons of Experience, we are apt to read of them with indifference, as mere matters of course, and of little other value than to furnish a paragraph for the newspapers.

And while I mention these vehicles of intelligence, to which our first meal is so much indebted, let me do them the justice to say, that

they would afford admirable and constant lessons of Experience, if read with that view. Many days in the year, for sixpence only, a man may learn to avoid three or four different ways of losing his life or limbs; and if some of their readers would pay as much attention to what passes in the streets and highways of this kingdom, as they pay to the transactions of the cabinets and camps of Europe, I am persuaded they might in the course of a few months lay up a very profitable stock of Experience, both good and cheap.

They would learn, for example, that what happened the other day in the Park is not the first thing of the kind within the memory of man. It is not the first time that weak ice has given way; and persons who remained long under the water were in former days in danger of losing their lives. They may also collect some very curious and useful particulars respecting horses; as that a horse that is not suitably prepared to draw in a chaise, will sometimes run away with it, and sometimes overturn it, or both; and that unbroken horses, and what are called "bits of blood," are too mettlesome and fiery for the many objects which the streets of London present to frighten them. It may also be gathered from the ex-

perience of sundry young, as well as old gentlemen, that a man who is accustomed to drive horses has some few advantages over one who has perhaps seldom taken the reins in his hand, or who endeavours to manage four horses, not because he knows how, but because it looks genteel. These may appear to be very simple instructions; but there is reason to think they might now and then be useful.

Another lesson which may be learned at these day-schools is, that a certain number of persons collected in one place constitute a mob; that the parties are very apt to squeeze one another, without reflecting that every man requires a certain degree of room in order to perform the common functions of life; and that when such squeezing or compressing takes place, the bills of mortality have been increased in a very surprizing manner. It may also be inferred from the same narratives, that the female sex is least able to combat the dangers of mobbing, although it appears that they have no little inclination to make the attempt, and that, in taking the poll on such occasions with as much accuracy as possible, caps have been known to exceed hats. As for children, particularly those at the breast, some very useful lessons of Experience may be derived from

reading the newspapers. But whether it be that their mothers cannot read, or that they have become converts to certain new doctrines about the mischiefs of a too great population, certain it is, that many of these babes are indebted to mobs, kicks, and cart-wheels, for a happy release from worldly cares.

With regard to the management of gigs, and other carriages, and boats, we learn that many persons never think themselves so fit to drive, or to row, as when conviviality has deprived them of sight and recollection. But the newspapers, who in this may be credited, for it is no party matter, assure us that such persons are now and then very much mistaken. They prove that, upon the whole, intoxication has no direct tendency to qualify a man for clearing a way-post, or a coal-barge; and that in all cases where life may be endangered, it would be requisite for him who manages such matters to possess rather more senses than fewer. I own that many young gentlemen are very tardy in admitting these facts; and it is for that reason that I wish to recommend to their study a course of casualties, such as may be found in any newspaper. Perhaps, too, our bills of mortality might be rendered more useful, if they recorded those accidents more fre-

quently and more particularly; how many were killed by a horse, how many departed this life in a boat, how many went to their long home in a barouche, and how many passed through the Serpentine River in their way to the other world.

Why Experience, when it presents itself in such various shapes, should be neglected, is a question on which I shall not at present enter. If it be thought to be owing to any rapid decay of memory, we have still such frequent opportunities of being reminded, that I should hope this cannot have any very great effect. If it be owing to a contempt for the Experience of others, and a desire to possess a stock of our own, I can only say, the means will never be wanting to accumulate such a stock; but, as already hinted, this ambition may be carried too far; and to instance only in one case, when a number of thoughtless persons have perished by venturing to skait on thin ice, it is not of much consequence to wish that it had been thicker.

THE PROJECTOR. N° 78.

"PEOPLE may have more wit than does them good,
As bodies perish through excess of blood."

POPE.

December 1807.

WHILE the mercantile world takes alarm at the impediments by which the belligerent powers are about to prevent the regular progress of importation and exportation, it must give every friend of his country pleasure to reflect that there are various articles which are so peculiarly of our own growth, and calculated for home consumption, as to be very little affected by the vigorous measures now in agitation. Among these, WIT seems to stand foremost as an article for which the demand is still adequate to the quantity on hand, and the quantity on hand fully able to answer every purpose of the consumer.

There are two kinds of WITS, differing much, it is true, in point of merit, but indispensably necessary to each other — those who make Wit,

and those who use it ready made. The former are the manufacturers, and the latter the retail dealers. The former call themselves Wits by profession, and never much relished the name of trade; and the latter, who are content with the article at second hand, are their echoes, and contribute greatly to their fame; for a piece of wit that is not circulated extensively by these echoes, is of no more value than a piece of any other sort of goods, which remains unsought in the merchant's warehouse.

However useful these two parties are to each other, there is no proportion between the numbers of the one and of the other. The Wits by profession have, indeed, according to their own report, been increasing of late years; but they still may be accounted a very small body, when compared with the dealers in second hand jokes, some of whom, if they are tolerable œconomists, can make a few articles last a very long time, by means of alterations, additions, or abridgements, suited to their various occasions. I hope that Wits will not censure my allusions to trade in speaking of their article, for there are certainly some very strong points of resemblance. Whoever consults those copious vehicles of Wit, the newspapers, will perceive that certain jokes adapted to certain

seasons and occasions are as regularly brought forward on those occasions and seasons, as the shopkeeper decorates his windows or his glass-frames with articles suited to winter or summer.

During Christmas, we have a choice cargo of jokes in the papers, very well adapted to that social season; but which would be extremely far out of place, were they to be brought forward in the months of July or August. And again, all those good things which are made up for the summer season, and calculated for the use of the watering-places, would appear as preposterous were they to be brought forward in the month of December. But the manufacturing Wits understand their trade better than to be guilty of such anachronisms, and have indeed by long practice acquired a very happy knack at timing their jokes. There are, for example, many anecdotes and "monstrous good things" which will suit a ministry coming into place, that would not hit the melancholy event of their going out: and the same series of *bon mots* which might produce a very good effect on a royal wedding, would be extremely *mal-a-propos* during a court-mourning. Not that the latter is exempted from its share of repartees, as we may see by the many standard jokes at the expence of the dealers in articles

of mourning, and the dyers of old clothes, and especially those œconomical ladies and gentlemen who upon such melancholy occasions do not scruple to make white black.

Such, indeed, is the demand for wit in this country, that the manufacture of it seems not to be interrupted by any of those events which interrupt the progress of other business. The very long duration and vicissitudes of the present war, for example, have had no effect on this article, except perhaps to vary its modes; and the number of "neat things" which follow every Extraordinary Gazette, affords a proof that Wit may be carried on amidst the bitterest hostilities and the strictest blockade. I am persuaded that an industrious compiler, with no other materials than a file of newspapers from the year 1793, might put together a very entertaining assemblage of smart jokes, under the title of "Bellona's Jests, or the Humours of Bloodshed."

As to lesser evils, such as decrease of trade, multiplication of bankruptcies, and of criminal offences, it is evident that these are frequently the subject of considerable merriment. Even in our Courts of Law, we hear of a burst of laughter from some well-timed story told for the benefit of the jury, and to keep the prisoner

in good humour. The Pulpit, indeed, is as yet free from this species of amusement; but it is no unfrequent practice for some of the congregation, assembled in the church-yard, to reward themselves for their long and silent attention, by sporting a few sallies, wonderfully neat and laughable, at the expence of the parson, or the clerk, or any individual among themselves.

Addison somewhere says that the Theatre is the seat of Wit: but I question whether this opinion be not nearly as obsolete as another which used to be joined to it; namely, that it is a school of Morality. To it, however, the publick has no doubt been indebted for a vast increase in the articles of Pun and Quibble, which pass under the common name of Wit, and are received as such by those who cannot afford the higher commodities. Indeed our footmen and porters as regularly take these kind of jokes from the Theatre, as our barrel-organs do their favourite songs. But experience has sometimes demonstrated that theatrical jokes lose their effect, or rather change their effect, when employed in the purposes of common life. A sarcasm which may produce applause in a crowded Theatre, will often produce only blows in the room of a tavern: and

there is a snappish tartness in dramatic dialogue, which does not suit the humour of real speakers, unless they are on the eve of a quarrel. At this important crisis, it is observed that Wit is followed by bursts of anger instead of laughter, and frequently terminates in a point more cutting than that of an epigram. Indeed I have often had occasion to remark that it is safer to borrow any thing from the stage than its Wit, and that it would be as dangerous to employ the sarcasms of the last Comedy in private company, as to carry on a courtship according to the plan of the last Novel.

The Theatre, however, is so far the reputed seat of Wit, that the publick are extremely unwilling to suffer any abatement in their attention to its concerns, however unseasonable this may appear to ladies and gentlemen of the old school. Whatever the aspect of public affairs may be, the affairs of the Theatres are still reckoned of consequence enough to demand our notice; and the disputes of managers and actors, about salaries, chastity, and other trifles, are never so forcibly obtruded, as when the publick may be supposed to be least inclined to listen to them. I would not, however, be thought to deprive those persons of such consolations who delight in them: and they must

be certainly the most easily contented of all people who can forget the state of Europe to look at the debts of the Opera-house, and think nothing in the threats of France and the hostility of its Allies so important to happiness, as the re-engagement of a singer at a salary far beyond that of a secretary of state.

But to return to the relative proportions of Wit, between the makers and the consumers. It has been thought by some, that London is the only place for this manufacture, as being the mart of every thing else that is elegant and fashionable; and it will be found that this was formerly the case, and is so still, in a considerable degree. The manufacture has, indeed, been attempted in some of our large towns; but the articles have been generally of a local kind; whereas what is made in London will suit all other places. Before the establishment of the present easy conveyance from the Metropolis to the most distant parts of the kingdom, the country people knew but little of this article, and were obliged to put up with a few worn-out samples, conveyed by an occasional visitor. But since the establishment of the mail-coaches, and particularly of daily morning and daily evening papers, they are but a very few hours behind us in our "good

things." The *bon mot* which has convulsed St. James's and St. George's parish, may now be enjoyed next morning with all the glee of novelty in any city within an hundred miles. Wit is consequently diffused over the country; and at Bath, Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, &c. may now be heard a series of jokes, as good as new. In these places a generation of Wits has arisen, who in time, and with a few months' education in London, bid fair to emulate the originality of the metropolitans. New editions of those valuable elementary treatises, Joe Miller and Ben Jonson, have also been largely circulated; and notwithstanding they have been nearly quite plundered by the dramatic writers, enough yet remains to set up a wit of moderate expectations in a good country trade.

In former days, certain of the Colleges in each of our Universities were renowned for the breed of Wits by profession; and jokes innumerable were manufactured each term in the common-room. Under-graduates consequently were excluded from these benefits, but Masters, and some promising Bachelors, were admitted to the partnership. On my last visit to one of our Universities, I had the honour to be admitted *ad eundem*; but I was surprised to find

that this branch of education was very much neglected. The few jokes I heard, which I was told were the produce of the College, were to my certain knowledge stray *bon mots* from London which had been matriculated under fictitious names. Upon inquiry into the causes of this falling-off, I was told that it was entirely owing to the conduct of the Examiners, who dwelt upon Latin, Greek, Logick, Mathematicks, and other articles of that kind, without ever inquiring whether the young gentleman could get up a *bon mot* extempore, or go through the mazes of a quibble. It was added, indeed, that among the under-graduates there was occasionally a something called *Quizzing*, which was mistaken for Wit, and consisted in breaking heads and windows; but that this was much discouraged by the Proctors, who were seldom men of humour.

Such, however, is the general diffusion of Wit throughout the country, that the professed Wit, a character formerly known only in the metropolis, may now be found in most of the provincial towns, and even in many villages. In the latter, if the traveller desires a companion to help him off with his bottle of port, the landlord can always send for the established Wit of the place, who is sometimes the excise-

man, and sometimes the schoolmaster. But in the introduction of professed Wits, whether in town or country, great care must be taken that two do not meet in the same room. A rivalship here does not produce the same good effect as in other cases; the articles, instead of being made better, are made worse. There is a jealousy, I am sorry to say it, among professed Wits, which is not to be found in the same excess among candidates of any other description. I remember to have been once present when two of great renown unfortunately met; and when the company were prepared for a double portion of good things. It was, however, obvious on their first meeting, that the dæmon of discord had determined to have his joke. For some time a profound silence prevailed; but one of them, aware for what he was invited, and conscious of his powers, began one of his best stories. The other in vain endeavoured to interrupt him; he kept fast hold of the company for half an hour, when, being obliged to take breath, the other pushed in, and began an anecdote longer than the former, and persisted, notwithstanding similar attempts to eject him from his vantage ground. The contest then became sharp: both spoke at once — but one had more strength of lungs —

"Sir, we are not contending who shall speak loudest" — "No, Sir, nor who shall speak longest." "But I was going to inform the company" — "Nay, you told us that before: I remember an anecdote of Lord Chesterfield" — "Sir, I had not done with Garrick" — and his antagonist happening to be seized with a fit of coughing, the friend of Garrick got in, and kept his station, in spite of all opposition, through a story that would have made a pamphlet. Next day, one of the parties called on the master of the house, and requested he would not invite him to meet with such a loquacious fellow again; and he was scarcely out of hearing, when the other came to request that he might never be asked to dine with one who would let nobody speak but himself, and did nothing but make people laugh all the afternoon.

These desultory remarks on the makers and retailers of Wit may be concluded with one observation, which, although not a new one, has perhaps been much less attended to than it deserves; and that is, the necessity of paying some little respect to truth. Some are of opinion that a joker is a privileged person, totally exempt from the obligations either of oath or affirmation. But, although it would be very

hard to put a professed Wit to his affidavit on every occasion, there are some very good judges who have declared that the essence of a story consists in its truth. "The value of every story," says Dr. Johnson, "depends on its being true. A story is a picture either of an individual or of human nature in general; if it be false, it is a picture of nothing." "It is more from carelessness about truth, than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world." This sentence may appear harsh, and if executed it may have a tendency to decrease the floating stock of *bon mots* and jokes; but upon the whole it bids fair to be attended with advantages which will more than compensate for what we lose, and will very much heighten the value of what we retain.

THE PROJECTOR. Nº 79.

——"Posset qui ignoscere servis,
Et signo læso non insanire lagenæ." HORAT

"Not prone to rage, although the felon's fork
Defaced the signet of a bottle cork." FRANCIS.

January 1808.

AMONG the objections which have been made to the views of human life presented by Dr. Johnson in his works, that which appears to have the best foundation is, that he too frequently represents life as a state of uninterrupted suffering, and consequently urges that misery is the irresistible lot of man. Some excuse, however, may be made for that learned and excellent moralist, by considering that he was insensibly led to describe his own state, when he should have been ascertaining the general condition of others; and that he oftener wrote from immediate feeling, than from acquired knowledge. But no such apology, I am afraid, can be made for those who create

misery, and then complain of it; who strive to make themselves unhappy, and then assert that they were born so. To such blame are all liable who study, for whatever reason, to multiply the avoidable miseries of human life.

If, indeed, we compare the pains and anxieties which are unavoidable, which it is not within our power to prevent, or perhaps to cure, with those which are purely of our own invention, and which we are perpetually employed in varying and increasing; we shall see very little reason to complain of the lot of man, but very much ground to censure the conduct of those who are the declared foes of thankfulness and contentment.

Of the numerous tribe of complainers, it will generally be found that the majority have no motive for complaint equal to the pleasure they take in expressing it. Of twenty grievances which form the subject of their repinings, half will appear to have been brought on by their own endeavours; and the other half are matters in which they have no immediate concern. There are some of this tribe, likewise, who, in default of any cause of murmuring on their own part, will echo the outcries of others, and affect a sympathy in adverse occurrences, merely because they give them an opportunity of

venting their spleen, and interrupting the quiet of cheerful minds.

There is, however, to this numerous class so much luxury in the language of complaint, and the ebullitions of temper, that I should, perhaps, be accused of insensibility, were I to endeavour to deprive them of the many sources of pleasure which they have opened. All, therefore, that I wish to contend for, is to regulate their angry passions in such a manner that there shall be some decent proportion between the complaint and the cause; and that, if they are determined to show with what ease and how frequently they can rage and storm, they should learn to dole out their wrath in equitable shares, and not bestow upon trifles what ought to be reserved for special and important occasions. I have no objection to Anger. It is on certain occurrences a very becoming passion; and it is so implanted in our nature, that perhaps we cannot venture to root it out altogether. But, as an indiscriminate employment of it is apt to lead to some small inconveniencies, there would, I humbly think, be no great harm, if it were put under certain regulations; and, as it is a passion which no person can call an ornament to the countenance, or one which improves the voice, it were surely

better to reserve it for such incidents as in some measure bring their own excuse with them.

Of all the causes for domestic misery, and its correspondent fits of passion, there is perhaps none so general and so frequently the ground of complaint, as the carelessness of servants. And true it is, that servants, being unfortunately made of nearly the same materials with their employers, do rarely discover more caution and wisdom in the management of their affairs. It is incredible, therefore, what mischief they create, how many things they break in cleaning, and how many things they misplace when they are wanted, how often they lie in bed when they should be up, and how often they wish to go abroad when they should stay at home. They too, it is melancholy to reflect, have their passions and their tempers; and are, indeed, in all respects so like their masters and mistresses, that, if they were not servants, one would be tempted to think they were human beings, born in the same way, and educated or neglected in the same manner. But Lady —— assures me that this is not the case; that they are only *creatures*; and that she never knew one of them otherwise, except a clergyman's daughter whom

she once employed about her person, and who was so awkward and stupid that she was a mere *creature*, until a distant relation died and left her two thousand pounds *per annum*.

These *creatures*, however, are not without their uses. So placid and serene are some families, and so abounding in all the circumstances that can constitute happiness, that, were it not for the blunders of servants, they would die of apathy, their passions would rust for want of use, and it would be suspected that the shrill upper tones of the human voice had been bestowed upon us for no purpose. What, therefore, is the cause of so much vigorous exertion, keeps passion alive, and occasions a brisk circulation of oaths and epithets that would else become obsolete, ought not surely to be stated as a serious cause for complaint; nor ought we, for the sake of the inhabitants of the kitchen, to argue that misery is the lot of the parlour. All I condition for is, as before hinted, that we learn to discriminate in our anger; and not bestow as much genuine wrath upon a broken tea-cup as upon a fractured limb. Yet, for want of attention to the scale of offences, we are, I am afraid, guilty of as much absurdity, not to say injustice, as that Legislature, which should enact the same

punishment for crimes of all degrees of magnitude, and admit of no distinction between accident and design.

To form a code of laws for our domestic regions, is not my purpose, and might, if attempted, be attended with many difficulties. There is so much variety of temper among the legislators of private houses, that perhaps no two would agree. What I wish, therefore, principally to insist on, is the due regulation of our resentments, and the consideration that real anger, such as flashes in the eyes and paints the countenance, such as produces a dumb confusion in some, and a brisk and rapid torrent of eloquence in others, should not be exhausted on trifles, but reserved for great occasions. When I have been enabled to survey the whole of human life, the many miseries to which man is subject by nature, practice, or *trade*, it has appeared to me that there are things in this world of infinitely more importance than a perfect set of china; that our constitutions are subject to decays, which should give us more uneasiness than the wearing out of brooms; and that, upon the whole, we are subject to revolutions of far more importance than the overturning of a table, or the falling of a decanter. There are likewise some phi-

losophers, but I mention this with submission to persons of greater experience, who are of opinion that the preservation of a sweet temper is of more consequence in the decoration of a house, than the rinsing of glass tumblers, or the polishing of steel fenders.

Calling a few days ago on an old acquaintance, I found the house in what some call an uproar. High words and angry words passed from room to room, and my reception was so indistinct and dubious, that I was not quite certain whether I might not take my departure unobserved. I was anxious, however, to learn the cause of so much apparent misery; and, as my friend is a trader to foreign countries, I was at first alarmed lest he had suffered by the late storms, and that all I saw was his family tenderly, though somewhat loudly, sympathizing in his distresses. As the noise became more distinct, however, I found that it drew to two points, which were deemed of sufficient importance to justify all I witnessed. The one was, that John had misplaced his master's dress shoes; the other, that William, who was sent for a coach, returned with the melancholy intelligence that no coach was to be seen on any stand within a mile. This, on a Sunday too, and during a smart shower, when the

streets through which they had to pass were dirty, and the dinner to which they were invited would be spoiled, produced many, if not all, the effects which may be supposed to result from bankruptcy, robbery, or housebreaking. I informed my friend that he should certainly have a niche in the Projector; and I promised, at the same time, to represent him as one of those who with every blessing under Heaven that is supposed to make up happiness, would yet be miserable, if he had no exercise for his anger upon trifles, and could not daily muster up a sufficient quantity of petty vexations to render home a place of greater variety of enjoyment.

It has sometimes been said in excuse for the exercise of anger upon lesser objects, that it is better to give it vent at once, than to keep it *brewing* in one's own mind; and sometimes we have been told of the mischiefs which arise from pent-up anger. But this analogy between the humours of the body and those of the mind is not quite perfect; and I am afraid that many more evils arise from the discharge than from the confinement of anger. It may likewise be observed in the case of those who are enabled to confine it, that it very soon goes off in a sort of insensible perspiration, leaving

the patient quite well, and, what is of considerable importance, free from any disagreeable reflections. A facetious author has termed swearing a *natural discharge;* and all I would propose is, that those who find it so, would retire to that nameless place provided in all such cases, and with as much polite caution and secrecy.

But the principal argument in favour of what I have recommended in this paper, namely, the limitation of anger to proper subjects, is; that anger, upon whatever account, is not a dignified passion. It adds nothing to the features but what they would appear to more advantage without. It confers no charms on the voice; and as to action, all writers on eloquence are agreed that nothing places the body in such grotesque forms. That numerous class, therefore, who study the effects of personal elegance, would do well to consider whether they ought, for a mere trifle, to suggest in the minds of their beholders, the possibility of ugliness. The apprehension of such a change must be fatal, for no man can admire the beauty which in a few minutes may amount to *a fright*, and will be apt to suspect that there is something very wrong in a countenance which may change colour ten times in a day.

It is mentioned as an objection to our climate, that we have frequently the extremes of weather in the space of twenty-four hours, and that more agreeable appointments, and projected jaunts and walks, are spoiled in Great Britain than in any part of the world. But yet even for this we have some remedy: our thermometers give us warning, and our habitations afford shelter: but what is our misery when we have no such helps? when we are doomed to the alternations of storm and sunshine, of fury and quiet, of war and peace, without warning, and without refuge? Disease may make slow advances; symptoms may announce the approaching evil; poverty may creep on by obvious and remediable causes; death itself may be foretold from inward decay and feelings; but who can foresee the crash of china, and the tearings of laces and silks; who can foretell that the soup may be thin, and the fowls raw; that the coach may have lost a wheel, and the chimney may fill the room with smoke? Who can order the spider not to build on the cieling, or the dust not to fall on the sideboard? A debtor may give notice that he is unable to take up his bills: but who can foresee that his dinner shall be put off till he is unable to eat? that the stage-coach is ar-

rived without the turkey, or that the sauce-boat has been dashed in pieces on the staircase?

Yet such are the vicissitudes which are made to excite the bitterness of resentment, while all that might be expected to provoke it is tolerated with calmness. The philosophy, indeed, of some persons is very remarkable, in bearing every misfortune which they may happen to have brought upon themselves. I would, therefore, recommend, as the conclusion of this paper, that anger, which properly employed is a very noble passion, and in poetry rises almost to the sublime, should be no longer wasted on trifles; and that it should be removed from the kitchen and stables to the drawing-room and parlour, where it may be restored to its pristine dignity, or moderated by *etiquette*. But as to those who are still indisposed to take this advice, and who love to fritter away their passions on brooms and brushes, saucepans and skillets, on burnt steaks and watery custards; and who would sooner pardon a flaw in a character than a hole in a table-cloth; I would only recommend to them to be exceedingly thankful that they can never be without such misfortunes, while servants stumble, or cats leap. Yet it appears very inconsistent in persons of this description to complain, at the

same time that they feed on the luxury of complaint, and to declare that they are unhappy from the very circumstances which seem to afford them the greatest pleasure. Whatever other indulgence may be allowed, this wayward disposition certainly ought to be checked; nor ought they upon any account to be permitted to complain that they are exposed to laughter or pity, since one or other of these emotions is inseparable from the lot of all who are so happy as to experience none of the real calamities of life, and so miserable as to substitute petty vexations and ridiculous distresses.

THE PROJECTOR. No 80.

—— "Qui timet his adversa, fere miratur eodem
Quo cupiens pacto: pavor est utrobique molestus."
HOR.

"If weak the pleasure that from these can spring,
The fear to want them, is as weak a thing:
Whether we dread, or whether we desire,
In either case, believe me, we admire." POPE.

February 1808.

PEOPLE OF FASHION, is a title given to few, arrogated by many, and envied by all. There is, however, a considerable and an acknowledged difficulty in understanding precisely what it means, and who are the happy persons thus separated from the majority of their fellow-creatures. Many attempts indeed have been made, to draw a line of circumvallation around them, by means of such a definition as shall secure their privileges, and exclude all pretenders. But although no combination of words has yet been formed that can render the matter so plain to the meanest capacity, as to prevent mistakes and disputes; we all are apt to think

that we know People of Fashion when we see them: and have the still greater presumption to think we know what we mean when we speak of those beings whom Nature or Art has placed beyond our reach, and only occasionally within our horizon. There are many grounds for supposing that in both cases we should be very much perplexed to explain our meaning, and to make that known to others, which, until the question is put, we think so familiar to ourselves. One reason for this loose species of incommunicable knowledge is, that we have lately taken it into our heads, that People of Fashion are become exceedingly numerous, and that their numbers may be at all times easily increased. Hence we no longer think it necessary to retain in our memories those nice distinctions which indicate a more confined sect. We fancy that it would be quite superfluous to explain what is obvious to the senses; and that to ask what is a Person of Fashion would be as childish as to ask what is an Englishman, or to what country Frenchmen, Germans, or Italians, belong.

People of Fashion is almost the only combination in which the word *People* is used in a superior, genteel, and commanding sense. All other *people* are those "whom nobody knows,"

and may be classed with the multitude, the mob, the canaille, or the vulgar. But by adding the magic words "of Fashion," *People* assumes a higher tone, becomes the mouths of the most beautiful, as well as of the most eloquent speakers, and is not thought unworthy to stand in the same line with the most lofty titles known in the Heralds' Office.

As I have stated that there are great difficulties in the way of those who would wish to illustrate People of Fashion by a definition, it may be supposed my duty to take care that this important matter shall be no longer in the dark. But in order to achieve this purpose, after all due deliberation and examination of many documents, I question whether I can recommend to my curious readers any other method than first to inquire what *Fashion* imports. Perhaps it may be urged that this is only evading one difficulty, by plunging into another; but if this be the case, it is not my fault that terms are so often used either without a meaning, or with one very difficult to be explained. The method now proposed, I am willing to own, may not appear the easiest; yet I am certain it is the only infallible one, according to all the rules of logick. In other cases it has never been known to fail. When

we wish to know the character of a man of learning, or a woman of sense, we have only to go to our dictionaries, or consult our intelligent friends as to learning and sense, and the question is immediately put in a train to be decided. I say put in a train to be decided, for I am not ignorant that even learning in men, and sense in women, have their peculiar difficulties, although they may be removed a little sooner than the unintelligible mysteries of Fashion.

We shall not perhaps advance very far on this subject, by stating, what nevertheless is very true, that Fashion is the custom of the few, for the admiration of the many. It will still be asked, what is that custom, and who are the few? and thus we shall be moving round, but not going forwards. For my own part, I am inclined to think that Fashion is one of those personages, or things, which are composed partly of what is visible, and partly of what is invisible. The visible part of Fashion is so constantly changing, that he who is required to say what it is, may justly plead that it never stays long enough to be examined. As to the incorporeal part, its influence, government, or tyranny, of the great numbers who feel it, few are able to say in what manner it

operates upon them, nor for what reason they are so controuled. Like epidemical disorders, some think they catch it from their neighbours, and others that it resides in the air, or climate. The former, however, is by far the more plausible theory; for it is very evident that communication with the infected never fails to bring it on, and that it is conveyed, in a very violent degree, in articles of dress or furniture, and by the same means, where there are no laws of quarantine established, may be sent to the most distant parts of the world. It is to be observed, too, that it rages most in crowded places, and that we never were free from it when the ports on the Continent were open, and our intercourse with France was intimate. There is but one circumstance in which it differs from other pestilential disorders, and that is, its not being checked by the approach of winter. On the contrary, that season is most remarkable for a general display of it in all its various symptoms and complicated appearances.

But it is not my intention to pursue this subject, which I rather propose as an exercise for their ingenuity who still pant to know what People of Fashion mean. I have no doubt that if they will pursue their inquiries with spirit, look carefully about them in public places and

public shops, they may learn a great deal, even if they should not ultimately arrive at a true knowledge of Fashion, and consequently of the *People* thereof.

I shall, therefore, employ the remainder of this paper in discussing one or two mistakes on the subject, which are very common and very dangerous. The first of these is an opinion, that rank constitutes fashion, or that persons of rank must therefore be People of Fashion In this position there is some truth and some error. Rank is undoubtedly an useful ingredient, and was once thought a necessary one, but it is not the only one; and it is certain that there are many persons of very high rank who discover so little *of fashion*, that they may be, and often have been, mistaken for persons of no rank at all; and in defiance of their titles, have been classed among the vulgar, among men of vulgar minds, and vulgar manners. No one, I think, will contend that a late Lord Chancellor, when pressed by a gang as an able-bodied seaman, was a Person of Fashion; nor will they very easily attempt to prove that the elegant charms of that character, and its popular fascinations, are exhibited in the person and manners, of his Grace the Duke of ——, or the Right Honourable

the Earl of ——. But I shall not enlarge farther on this mistaken notion, because several persons of rank have lately anticipated me, by taking wonderful pains to prove how groundless it is. They have indeed made it quite ridiculous, by presiding at boxing-matches and cock-fights, and exchanging manners and language with ostlers and jockies.

Another mistake, perhaps more common, and certainly more dangerous, is, that fortune constitutes People of Fashion. Now, although fortune, like rank, be a very useful ingredient in this composition, as it is in every other, yet it does by no means follow, that persons of Fashion are so constituted or created by virtue of their annual incomes, or by any other virtue that arises from half-yearly dividends. Those who are observers of what passes around them, must be sensible that there are many persons of very large property who are not People of Fashion. This, indeed, is so generally acknowledged, that it might have been omitted, if some persons who are willing enough to acknowledge the abstract proposition, were not very apt to forget, in their visits and connexions, that wealth only cannot constitute People of Fashion; and that every expence incurred in the attempt is just so much money thrown away,

since the returns are only a certain quantity of ridicule and disappointment; neither of which, according to the best calculations, are worth the price paid. For want, however, of an attention to this fact, we see every day the most strenuous and pitiable efforts made to be admitted among People of Fashion, and to obtain a full enjoyment of their privileges and immunities. Yet while we deplore the extravagant sums expended by such candidates, to the great injury of themselves and their families, to the felling of their oaks, and the mortgaging of their lands, we are compelled on the other hand to admire the truly independent and patriotic conduct of Persons of Fashion, whose privileges and titles are neither to be bought nor sold.

I would not, however, so undervalue riches, as to insinuate that they are absolutely useless in promoting our admission into — not the circles of Fashion, for that is as easy as money can make it—but into the reputation, the character of People of Fashion, whose high privilege it is to be looked up to, to be followed, to be imitated, to excite the gaze and the admiration of the world, and to have a peculiar licence for performing actions which no other persons can attempt with impunity. It is not

to be supposed that the repeated offers even of mere wealth, which carries with it somewhat very insinuating and persuasive, will always be so rejected, that no returns can be made, and no compromise adopted. But although all this be true, and many People of Fashion have condescended to stoop to those who could not have reached to them, had they stood upright, yet it is necessary that the lower world should know two things.—First, that in order to accomplish their wish in any moderate degree, a long time of probation is necessary, a tedious noviciate, in which all is humble imitation and elementary instruction; and, secondly, that a much larger portion of wealth is requisite than is generally supposed. What the exact sum is, I have not conversed long enough with the initiated to know; it is a question which they are seldom willing, and from their careless manner of keeping accounts, seldom able, to answer. But although I cannot set down the sum in figures with a Cocker-like precision, I am confidently assured that it is generally expected to be a little over the annual income, and that such exceedings are to be provided for by that anticipation of the revenue which depends on credit. Some are apt to think that the Chancellor of his Majesty's Exchequer is

the only person in the kingdom who is puzzled to make up differences between income and expenditure. Alas! they little know how many of the candidates I am now speaking of, as well as People of Fashion themselves, have their little budgets, their loans, their deficits, and their arrears. I would not, however, have any of my friends in Capel Court be elevated at this information, as if their ready command of money placed them in the high way to become People of Fashion. They ought to know that they may have the reputation of lending a million *per* week, or even *per* day, without being on that account admitted into the rank of People of Fashion. All this will avail them nothing, while they retain certain narrow and city-like notions about security and indemnification, days of payment, punctuality, and other prejudices of education.

This incidental notice of the City suggests to me another popular mistake, which I can correct only by assuring my readers that the title and privileges of People of Fashion are local, and that nothing is of more consequence in studying this subject than an acquaintance with the topographical boundaries of Fashion. People of Fashion are confined principally to the parishes situated in and about the Western part

of the metropolis, and cannot be supposed, unless by a forced construction, to exist within the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor of London. Attempts, it must be allowed, have of late years been made to bring them Eastward, or to plant a colony in that quarter; and the narrowness of the streets, and the smallness of the houses, have no doubt afforded tolerable imitations of the confusion which attends the breaking of coach-glasses and coachmen's heads, of ladies fainting in crowds, and other genteel casualties which give *eclat* to a *rout;* and without which, a rout would degenerate to a social and comfortable meeting of friends. But this is imitation, not originality, and cannot, even if the imitation were closer, make a dignified figure in the newspapers, owing to the deficiencies of nominal situation. Grosvenor-square, St. James's-street, and Portland-place, are mellifluous sounds, and picturesque objects, that please the eye as well as the ear; but what real person of fashion could hear without a blush, that he had partaken of the *dejeunés* of Crutched-friars, the cold collations of Old Bedlam, or the routs of Philpot-lane. I hope, therefore, that my worthy friends, who have the misfortune to live in places that are not fit to be named, will take these hints

into consideration, and remember that Fashionable People and People of Fashion are not precisely one and the same.

I shall conclude my paper with adverting to one other difficulty in the way of those who, presuming upon their wealth, have the ambition to become People of Fashion, and that is their beginning too late in life. After many years employed in acquiring riches, it is somewhat hard to be obliged to go to a new school to learn to spend them. In advanced age there is a want of flexibility in the organs of speech, and a want of pliability in the system of opinions, which have a natural tendency to unfit a man for a new language and a new world. If he begins early, unquestionably much may be acquired; but in general the best People of Fashion have been born in that character. With respect to the precise time of life, when those may attempt it who have not had such felicity of birth, opinions are too various to be reconciled. As far as my observation goes, they cannot begin too early; and the attempt will certainly and totally fail, if they delay it till they are come to the YEARS OF DISCRETION.

THE PROJECTOR. No 81.

———— "Nam id arbitror adprimè in vitâ esse utile, ut ne quid nimis." TERENCE.

March 1808.

It has been remarked by an eminent Moralist, that some men have an unhappy penetration in discerning faults; which, he observes, has a greater tendency to vitiate the temper than to improve the understanding. But it unfortunately happens that persons of this disposition have a notion that strength of understanding is best displayed by finding fault; and that to be very peevish and very wise, is the lot of all who are born to set mankind right.

My neighbour Mr. *Bluster* has for so many years studied the art of finding fault, that his oldest friends are unable to recollect that he was ever pleased. He appears to have fixed in his own mind a certain standard of perfection, to which the most trifling circumstances are brought; and as such perfection is rarely to be found, he has no reason to complain of the

danger of dwindling into contentment. As a husband and the father of a family, he is the envy of all who know the merits and accomplishments of his amiable wife and dutiful children; but those are enjoyments which afford him very little satisfaction. His wife is either too attentive or too careless, and his children too knowing or too stupid. His fortune is ample; but luckily the state of public affairs affords him much cause to complain that taxes are enormous, and provisions dear. His servants, distinguished in the neighbourhood for neatness, cleanliness, and circumspect behaviour, are sluts and slatterns; his cook is perpetually dressing his dinner too much or too little; and there is not a bottle of good wine, or an ounce of good tea, to be found within the bills of mortality.

In making these complaints, which to his friends would be intolerable if they were not at the same time unintelligible, he is accustomed to back his assertions by appeals to some distant period when things were otherwise, some imaginary golden age, when rooms did not want washing and scouring, and when glass and china could not be broken; when servants never forgot what they were ordered to remember, and horses and carriages were liable to no

accidents; when the streets were without danger, and the highways without robbers. He fancies too, that he remembers when all judges were just, and all exactors righteous men; when the rich were without pride, and the poor without necessities. He even hints that the weather of this country is not what it used to be; and is fond of recollecting the happy days when cold did not pinch, nor heat relax, as they now do: and it was but the last time I dined with him that he complained that the fowls were not what they used to be; and that coals and candles gave no such heat and light as he could remember.

But what excites his most violent rage is the perusal of a newspaper. From the first paragraph to the marriages and deaths, he is sure to meet with something to put him in a passion. He can with great difficulty read of a carriage breaking down, without discharging his rage against coachmakers, paviours, and inspectors of streets. If a horse takes fright, he denounces vengeance on stable-keepers, drummers, flags, and paper-kites. But a robbery affects him yet more violently; and such is the force of sympathy, that he appears to suffer as much as the party robbed, and gets no relief until he has vented his spleen on the

whole tribe of Police-justices, Bow-street runners, and thief-takers. If he reads of a grand dinner, or a lady's rout, he seems to suffer all the pangs of a personal insult; and inveighs against the luxury, prodigality, and folly of the times, as if these things were directed against him, and injured him only. During these paroxysms he has been known to rise from his chair, pace round the room with hasty steps, and sit down again, only to be disturbed by some other event, which he declares he cannot bear, and yet is not happy if he does not read it over with eager attention. Trials at law are a constant source of discontent; and the madness of plaintiffs and defendants seem to fall upon his devoted head, as if he were the only sufferer. He enters deeply into all the examinations before sitting magistrates; and not a pocket can be picked without irritating him as much as if he felt the thief's hand in his own. If a scaffold breaks down, what a set of scoundrels are our builders and carpenters! what rascals are they who ought to inspect such erections! These epithets indeed are among the most decent in his collection, and applied so generally, that there are few of the classes into which mankind are divided that are not honoured with them in the

gross, besides particular applications to the individuals whose names are unfortunately presented to his eye in the newspaper.

At no great distance from him lives another acquaintance, whom I may offer as a contrast, for such in all respects is Mr. *Placid*, a man of such equanimity, that it is much more difficult to ruffle him, than to keep the other quiet. It is said, indeed, that Mr. *Placid* inherits his uncommon meekness of disposition from a father who was deaf and dumb, and in his latter days deprived of sight; and his mother was of the family of *Neutrals*. So far is Mr. *Placid* from being moved by any of those circumstances which excite Mr. *Bluster's* passions, that he maintains a constant composure of countenance under the most trying occurrences. Instead of magnifying little things, he seems to consider every thing as too little to disturb his repose; and has lived near threescore years without discovering that he has a particle of anger in his whole composition. By those who are not much acquainted with him, he passes for one who must have been extremely fortunate in his business and connexions; but this is not the case, as he has encountered many of the usual adversities of life, although he has never yet met with one which

could disturb the inflexibility of his temper. His neighbour *Bluster* and he seldom meet. *Bluster* looks on him as a stupid stock, or a stone, a poor-spirited creature, with no more feeling than the chair he sits on; while Mr. *Placid*, with his characteristic gentleness, contents himself with retorting, that Mr. *Bluster* would be a good man were he a little less warm. *Bluster*, however, occasionally calls upon him to give him his opinions of men and things; because he is pleased to find one of his acquaintance who will hear him calmly, and never disturb his sentiments by any thing in the shape of a reply.

Mr. *Placid's* mode of giving an opinion is so different from that of his furious neighbour, that much interchange of thought is not to be expected between them. The events of a newspaper, whether serious or humorous, seem to be read by him with equal indifference; and the utmost he has been heard to say of robberies or murders is, that "such things had better be prevented;" or if an accident has occasioned the death of two or three persons, he thinks "it is a pity that it was not foreseen." The catastrophes of last year, at the Old Bailey, and at Sadler's Wells, produced only a very gentle hint on the folly of curiosity, and

the impropriety of too hastily taking alarm. Indeed there is no doubt that if he had been present at Sadler's Wells on the fatal night, he would have remained in his seat with his usual composure. Among his other placid perfections, that of being a stranger to fear or suspicion is most remarkable; and were not his servants more careful than himself, his house would often present an easy access to depredators, while his neighbour *Bluster* thinks of nothing but fire and thieves, and is perpetually purchasing new-invented locks, rope ladders, and other precautionary articles, and the very name of a house-breaker is sure to throw him in a rage. All this Mr. *Placid* hears with his usual gravity; or if he does muster up a few words, they are directed against the temptations thrown in the way of depredators, "who, he allows, *must live.*"

As to quarrels and disputes, Mr. *Placid* has never yet discovered any thing worth quarrelling about: he has no notion of going to law, although he thinks law-suits are sometimes unavoidable: and as to persons being half-ruined by them, he is humbly of opinion that "it would be better if it were otherwise." Unlike Mr. *Bluster*, who is continually getting into difficulties, by meddling unasked with the

affairs of other people, Mr. *Placid* seems to have laid it down as a maxim, that every man is best qualified to manage his own affairs, and it is more difficult to obtain his opinion when necessary, than to prevent the other from interfering where he can only do mischief. Mr. *Bluster*, when he finds that he has made matters worse, declares with his usual violence that he "meant well," and "did all for the best;" while Mr. *Placid* means only to keep out of harm's way; and his infallible rule is, to escape blame by doing nothing. Mr. *Bluster* considers himself as personally concerned in every thing that happens, whether near or remote; and so extensive is his sympathy, that he enters into every man's concerns. Mr. *Placid*, on the contrary, knows exactly what belongs to himself, and never travels an inch out of his way to share either in the pain or pleasure of others. *Bluster*, while reading a Gazette, seems to traverse the field of battle with all the indignation of a disappointed general, or with all the eagerness of a triumphant hero. Mr. *Placid* would bestow just as much attention on a page of the Whole Duty of Man, or the Pilgrim's Progress; and as to the resentment and indignation of his neighbour, he was never heard to pronounce the

words *rogue* or *rascal*, unless they occurred in the course of reading. Mr. *Placid* finds fault with no man, but Mr. *Bluster's* life is a series of comminations.

The folly of extremes is exemplified in these characters, which are perhaps more common than is generally supposed; but it is evident that the preferable character must be compounded of something between both. *Bluster*, with many good qualities, is a torment to himself, and is in danger of committing errors of importance from excess of passion, while he disturbs the harmony of social life by fastidious dislikes. *Placid*, with equally good qualities, is likely to settle in that apathy of disposition which prevents the due exercise of the charities of human nature, and is a-kin to selfishness. He allows matters to become worse by not interposing his wisdom: while the other mars the natural progress of an event by ill-timed intrusion.

How far we are so much concerned in what is passing around us as to interpose either in act or intention, must depend on more circumstances than can be collected together in a speculative essay. It is certain that the offices and duties of humanity are what no man can deny to be incumbent at all times and on all

occasions. It is no less true that what we see and hear of criminality or folly will excite in every good mind a certain degree of indignation; but there can be no occasion for ebullitions of passion, or for considering what has happened to others as having happened to ourselves. Indeed, as to all useful purposes, this is so contrary to our natures, that he who pretends to it may be considered as affecting more than he feels, and as counterfeiting a degree of suffering, which, if he did feel, would incapacitate him from what is more directly his duty.

It has been often said that man is prone to extremes; and in the case of the characters now sketched, we see a proneness to an unalterable extreme. But the more general error is that of going from one extreme to another, which is common with minds that are not formed upon sound principles. It is this which has not only occasioned much loose and fickle morality, but all those irregularities of feeling, which make friendship, humanity, and other virtues, depend on the humour of the moment, rather than on any solid source or foundation. With regard, however, to the more immediate subject of this paper, the regulation of the temper, it appears to be of essential importance

to steer between the extremes of passion and apathy. While we share amply and conscientiously in the affairs which concern "our bosoms and business," let us take care that we do not multiply the vexations of life, by an anxious care for that in which we are but remotely interested, or by repining that what is human should be imperfect.

THE PROJECTOR. Nº 82.

—— "Laudator temporis acti
Se puero, censor castigatorque minorum." Hor.

April 1808.

"TO THE AUTHOR OF THE PROJECTOR.

"SIR,

"I hope I shall secure this letter a favourable reception in your Paper, when I announce myself as an Antiquary, one of a class of men to whom your friend Mr. Urban has ever extended his protection, and whose labours he has ever welcomed with a hearty

zeal. But it may be necessary to apprize your readers, Mr. Projector, that the objects of my researches come more immediately within your plan, than those in which my brother Antiquaries at Somerset-house are usually employed. It may be necessary to inform your readers, that I am not about to introduce them into the keep of a castle, or the chapel of a cathedral. I have nothing to advance respecting battlements and buttresses, naves and chancels. I wish not to dip into the controversies that have been excited by the Goths and Grecians, the advocates of pointed or semicircular arches; I have no light to throw upon vaulted roofs, clustered pillars, transepts, door-cases, or choirs. I have no inclination to divert their attention from your favourite topicks of morals and manners, to the *minutiæ* of screens and stalls; perks and tabernacles; crypts and vaults; fonts, cloisters, spires, and steeples. I leave these matters, the importance of which I at the same time acknowledge, to men who have made those noble remains of antient grandeur their peculiar study—the Goughs and the Carters, the Lysonses and the Nicholses of our time; and I know not in whose hands they can be more safely reposed.

For my part, Sir, I profess myself to be an

Antiquary of Manners, a searcher into the modes and customs of past times, and have been for many years so indefatigably intent upon what our predecessors have been saying and doing in this way, that I am ready to acknowledge my total ignorance of what is now passing, except in cases where I find it necessary to obtain a little knowledge, that I may compare things past with things present. And so eagerly have I been attached to this study, that the best recommendation any thing can have with me is its being old. Hence I must candidly own, among other consequences of this my taste, that I have more comfort in my wife, who like myself is well stricken in years, and a very fine piece of ruins, than in my children, who can remember nothing beyond twenty or thirty years. Hence also, I still preserve the antient early hours of meals, of going to rest, and of rising. I know no authority, at least I am not disposed to acknowledge any, by which the day has been so oddly divided, that we cannot tell, for six months together, where it begins, or where it ends. I know not by whom, or for what, our mornings were lengthened to such a degree as to occupy the whole of the day; and our afternoons and evenings thrown into the shades of night.

Disliking, therefore, all such innovations, I may often be found dining when my neighbours have scarcely done breakfast. I drink tea when they are preparing to dress for dinner; and I keep up the good old custom of a comfortable supper (that most social meal) when they are calling for water-glasses, and preparing for the dessert.

All this I confess has put me a little back in the world, and I am looked upon as a most unseasonable creature, whether I visit or am visited. Still there is a small society of us, who endeavour to keep one another in countenance; and, what perhaps will surprise many of your Readers, we may be detected in the very fact of dining at one o'clock on Sundays —that our servants, as well as ourselves, may go to Church in the afternoon; I mean what was formerly called the afternoon. In other parts of my domestic œconomy you may likewise discern shreds and remnants of past times. My sideboard of plate, although not very extensive in the number of articles, is pretty much so in dimensions; and each piece bears the initials of my great grandfather, who was the first that set up a silver candlestick in the family. All my plate, indeed, is of such goodly size, as to breadth of base, that were a

pair of my candlesticks to be placed on a modern tea-table, the tea-things must find room somewhere else. But in some articles I have not been able to preserve the *costume* of my ancestors. In the cut of my coat I cannot, after many attempts, adhere so obstinately to former days, because I cannot find a tailor sufficiently conversant with the antiquities of attire. On the other hand, my wife's caps and bonnets are of the beginning of the present reign; and my daughters, although really very pretty girls, are still comfortably cloathed, and have not been prevailed upon to discover much more of their skin than what was formerly contemplated in the face and hands.

In my library I have been enabled to gratify my antient prejudices, if they deserve to be so called. My books bear all the proper and genuine marks of the age in which they were published. In all my visitations to the booksellers shops, I make it a point to prefer what are to be found "in the original binding." I honour the age-stained yellow of the leaves; and revere the former owners' names, especially if written in an almost unintelligible old hand. It is in vain that my worthy friend of Pall Mall endeavours to tempt me with his *cor. Russ. eleg. compact. fol. deaurat.*; and I

look without a particle of envy at your hot-pressed and wire-wove productions of modern times. But a presentation copy of the sixteenth century is with me the greatest treasure, and I flatter myself that I am possessed of a rare collection of primitive Divinity, handed down in a direct line from the good old authors, attested by their own hands, 'To my lovinge friende, Master, &c.' and adorned by their striking effigies in beards and ruffs.

"Other particulars of my taste I may perhaps take a future opportunity to communicate; but it is more necessary at this time to come immediately to the purpose of my letter, which was, to say a few words on the manners of our days, in comparison with the manners of those days that are not so very long past as to be quite out of the remembrance of some persons now living. I have lately been perusing many volumes of newspapers about half a century old, (for any thing within that period is not much to my taste;) and as newspapers are 'the abstract and brief chronicles of the times,' and convey to us, with more minuteness than any other species of historical record, the modes and customs of the passing day, I shall trouble you with a few remarks which occurred as part of the result of my labours.

"In the first place, I could not help observing how low money is sunk in value within the time specified;—indeed every one who peruses the news of that time, must be struck with a variety of circumstances in proof of this depreciation. It was then thought of importance to communicate to the world, that on such a day 'died Mr. ——, an *eminent* broker or merchant, worth twenty thousand pounds.' Now, Sir, it is certain that no paper in our days would condescend to notice an event of this kind: and why? Truly, because the sum would appear too trifling for a newspaper, and the editor would either be laughed at, or censured as deficient in respect for his readers, when he could suppose them interested in such a paltry fortune. Yet in the estimation of some individuals of the old school, twenty thousand pounds may seem deserving of notice. It may even appear to be a sum large enough to be adequate to the maintenance of a family; and sufficient to extend a bountiful share of good to those who are worse provided: but the publick has certainly so far lost all respect for it, that whether a man died with such a sum in possession, or breaks with it in debt, he is not thought deserving of much attention; whereas, if his debts amount to ten times the

sum, and if he has reserved only six-pence in the pound for his creditors, he is thought a person of superior consequence, and his character is treated with all the respect due to a man of eminence.

"I may remark, likewise, that it was then very common to announce, that 'Mr. ——— was married to Miss ———, a young lady with five thousand pounds fortune, and every qualification to render the marriage state happy.' But this kind of information is no longer communicated. Whether the five thousand pounds implied the qualifications, or was to be placed to a distinct account, and might exist without them, I know not; but it is certain that no man would boast, in a newspaper, of five thousand pounds; and as to qualifications of any other kind, they are no longer announced. Perhaps it has been thought a little premature to praise a lady upon account of qualifications for marriage, the value of which can only be estimated after she is married; but this cannot, in all cases, account for the disuse of a compliment so flattering to the bride and her family, and I suspect there are other causes not so easily ascertained. I observe that within the same period, a degree of conscientiousness is creeping into our church-yards; and whether

we are more fond of truth or of censure, it may be observed that there is a lamentable falling-off in the articles of affectionate wives and tender mothers, as well as of the same species of fathers and husbands.

"On perusing the intelligence of past days, we may likewise observe that the importance attached to certain articles seems now to be abated. It was then thought necessary to announce when the Drapers or the Fishmongers had their annual feast; when the Apothecaries went to Chelsea to cull simples; when the Rev. Mr. Litany was chosen curate; the Rev. Mr. Drowsy afternoon-lecturer; or when their respective churches were shut up, in order to be 'beautified and repaired.' But these, and many other equally important events, now take place without public notice, and seem considered as matters of course which every body knows, or concerning which it is not a dire misfortune to remain in ignorance. Let me also notice a vast decrease in the bills of *eminent* mortality, in the deaths of eminent tallow-chandlers, eminent braziers, eminent pawnbrokers, and eminent brush-makers—men who died suddenly, after eating a hearty dinner, at their country seats near Hoxton, Kentish Town, or the rural extremity of Shoreditch or Gray's Inn Lane.

"While some matters are now omitted that were then considered as very interesting articles of intelligence, there are others which our ancestors would have probably contemplated with indifference. These, however, have now risen to some degree of importance. If there are few *eminent* men, there is a vast increase in the population of *Esquires*, who, by some kind of crossing or mixing of breed, have created a species of human beings who are neither gentlemen nor tradesmen, but so far as pride or necessity inclines to the one occupation or the other. The age of plain *Misters* is nearly gone; and I am told by an *eminent* letter-carrier, that two-thirds of the revenue arising to the General and Two-penny Post-offices is collected from *Squires*.

"It may be remarked also, that if we have fewer notices of public feasting, we have abundant intelligence respecting private entertainments, if the entertainments which Fashion prescribes in our days deserve to be called private. Whoever gives a dinner or a concert, or only cards, may depend on their magnificence and hospitality being handed down to posterity; and as much attention is paid to the manner in which the guests are dressed, as to that in which the dishes are cooked. Fame will

always excite rivalship; and newspaper fame is accounted of so much value, that a powerful struggle subsists between the hosts and hostesses, as to whose entertainments shall make the best figure, that is, supply the longest narrative for the paper. But, although the historians of such matters have displayed a considerable degree of skill, and probably invention, in those splendid accounts, it may be doubted whether frequent repetition has not dulled their faculties. To a man who knows nothing of the matter but from what they relate, the difference between one rout and another seems to be almost imperceptible—a few pounds of untimely cherries, more or less, or a few more fainting fits, hot-house plants, or Scotch reels, seem to be the only means by which envy can be excited, or superiority decided.

There is another class of articles in which Time has made very little change, and concerning which it would appear that there is an inclination to perpetuate them in spite of all experience. Besides the tricks and feats of sharpers and highwaymen, footpads and housebreakers, which, with the correspondent neglect of police officers, have always been the subject of complaint, suicides still continue to

terminate a life which would have ended with more propriety in other hands. Duels are still fought for the usual objects, a horse, or a woman of nearly the same value. Provisions, about fifty years ago, were so scarce and dear that nobody could live; and they remain so to this day, in spite of the contradictions of increased population. But, above all, the country continues, every now and then, to be completely ruined by one race of ministers after another; the times too are perpetually very bad, although patriots are starting up on all sides, who find men as ready to believe their professions as they were at the period above mentioned; and as ready, when disappointed, to carry their credulity to another market. Whatever changes, therefore, may have taken place in some articles specified in my letter, and in others which I might have specified, there are others concerning which, Mr. PROJECTOR, we may say, 'There is nothing new under the Sun.'

"I am, Sir,

"Yours, &c.

"F. S. A. by inclination."

THE PROJECTOR, Nº 83.

"If Fate forbears us, Fancy strikes the blow;
We make misfortunes." YOUNG.

May 1808.

PUBLIC attention has lately been more than usually called to the subject of Suicide; and a few remarkable instances having occurred within a short space of time, it has been supposed that that crime is more frequent than formerly. In this, perhaps, there may be some truth; but, at the same time, it must be considered that we are apt to dwell on an instance of Suicide in a person of rank, and forget that with all his rank, and all the public conversation which he occasions, he can add but one to the general number. There is another consequence, however, of such examples, which may be more beneficial. They serve to shew the crime in a more heinous light, since every crime must appear with peculiar aggravations when it is committed by those who from education, situation, and connexions in life, are supposed to be above the temptations which

easily overcome the ignorant, the poor, and the forlorn.

Among other propositions made on such occasions, some are for soliciting a remedy at the hands of the Legislature. They are of opinion, that inflicting a mark of disgrace on the bodies of Suicides, would affect those who are impelled to the crime from a sense of shame, whether true or false. But besides that the law already admits of this, where Lunacy cannot be proved, it may be doubted whether the wisest legislators could succeed in preventing a crime, which, from its very nature, removes the criminal from all jurisdiction; a crime which demonstrates that he is indifferent to all laws, human and divine, and is about to inflict upon himself the only punishment which the law has prescribed for the highest crimes. He, indeed, who is determined to take away his own life, and to abide by the consequences, may commit the breach of every law whatever, before he inflicts the punishment. "Suppose," says Dr. Johnson, "a man, either from fear, or pride, or conscience, or whatever motive, has resolved to kill himself: when once the resolution is taken, he has nothing to fear. He may then go and take the King of Prussia by the nose, at the head of his army. He cannot

fear the rack, who is resolved to kill himself. When Eustace Budgell was walking down to the Thames, determined to drown himself, he might, if he pleased, without any apprehension of danger, have turned aside, and first set fire to St. James's palace."

It may be questioned, therefore, whether the Legislature could be more uselessly employed than in framing a law against Suicide; but if any number of Senators mean to propose such a law, there are many previous questions which might very profitably engage their attention. It might be necessary to inquire, whether they could, by a penal statute, prevent a man from frequenting the gaming-table, or from robbing his employers; or, which perhaps might be yet a little more difficult, from being jealous of his wife, fond of building streets and squares, or of forming commercial speculations.

The increase of Suicide appears to me to be one of those obligations which we owe to the Philosophers, whether antient or modern, who have laboured to compose a system of human conduct and human happiness, in which Religion should have no share, and in which honour and honesty should be admitted only where they consented to contribute to the above

system, without any of those stiff prejudices and unbending principles which are found to be unfriendly to it. That those Philosophers received a considerable check in this country some years ago, when they were attempting to propagate their doctrines upon a large scale, is true:—but it is also true that they did not labour in vain, during the period in which they were tolerated. In a neighbouring nation their success was complete; and the inhabitants of that nation are, no doubt, disposed to look back with singular complacency on their benevolent and beneficent endeavours; on the ease with which they familiarized bloodshed and dishonesty; and on the charms—the classical charms, with which they ornamented the act of Suicide; and emancipated the mind from all restraints, either temporary or lasting, which bore hard on the temper.

But, although the *system* is perhaps not at present so publicly encouraged in this country, its effects are no less successfully extended by a sort of tacit precepts, which some call example, and some fashion, and which end in the same consequences. Emancipation from the principles of integrity, from the labours of industry, and from the regular profits of trade, is become so necessary, that much instruction

or detail of argument may be dispensed with in acquiring it. A man who is determined to rise to the highest rank which his situation can admit, without passing through the intermediate steps; who is determined to acquire opulence before he can boast of even competence; and who sees no crime in supplying the deficiencies of his own pocket by making free with his neighbour's; has no occasion to peruse any of the writings of our modern Philosophers, or go through a regular course of Infidelity. If he succeeds, he knows that he can stop the mouth of opposition: he can procure the countenance of his equals and his superiors by entertainments and balls; and if he fails, the pistol or the halter concludes his speculation in a manner that is inconsistent only in being administered by his own hand. In all this there seems to be little to learn that is not learnt by imitation only; there seems to have been no extraordinary change made in the habits of thinking. Professions of wisdom and integrity are frequently made, and remain undisturbed: and deviations into a contrary practice are acknowledged to, produce ruin and shame. Yet with this consciousness of what is right and wrong, every man seems to calculate on the possibility of escape or recovery.

He looks to the few who have got off with impunity; learns to substitute the laws of chance for the rules of trade; and although sensible that the course he has taken unavoidably leads to destruction, hopes that he may astonish the world with a striking exception.

Of the great number of Suicides whose cases have been of late years reported to the world, the major part are men who have considered the acquisition of wealth as the only object worthy of the attention of a rational creature, and who have been so impatient to accumulate some imaginary quantity, as not to hesitate at any steps by which it may be procured, and to disdain the slow progress and unavoidable delays of commercial routine. If it be asked why they are thus eager for riches beyond the expectations which trade can justify — beyond all the demands of luxury and convenience — we are referred to another principle, which seems lately to have increased the number of Suicides, namely, an ostentatious display of useless grandeur, and an ambition to associate with those whom rank, hereditary honours, and wealth, seem to have placed at an inaccessible distance. Of all the absurdities of human conduct which Fashion or Folly has created, this seems one of the most unaccountable, since it

produces at best the privilege of being lavish without conferring obligation; and of giving entertainments to persons of superior rank and wealth, who reflect upon them only as objects of ridicule. If this ostentation is practised with a view to support credit, which is said to be the usual motive, the absurdity becomes yet more glaring. Commercial credit is not so ill understood as that any man's solvency is to be estimated by his waste, and that he is supposed to be the *safest* who seems to know the least what to do with his money. Accordingly, such tricks, for tricks they are, have rarely imposed on any but those at a distance from the object. His immediate connexions know that his splendour is only a covering to his poverty, and indicates the approach of ruin: but they are silent as well as cautious. The bubble therefore bursts when it is least expected, and the coroner's verdict proclaims him a *lunatick*, who, after deliberately robbing every person who put confidence in him, sits down quietly and orderly to write letters to his friends, and to end his life with due deliberation. Of his entertainments little is now remembered, except that they were too expensive for a man of his station; that he had no business with hot-houses and pineries; and that fewer than twenty beds

might have been made up in a night for his guests. Some remark, that although his French wines were not only excellent, but plentiful, yet he might have done very well without a service of plate; and of his visitors the greater part are surprised that no one should have given him a little advice, and particularly express their wonder that persons of rank should condescend to precipitate his ruin by their expensive visits.

It is one of the principal consequences of that avarice and vanity which lead to extravagance and ostentation, that few can be restrained within the bounds which education and talents seem to have prescribed. Men of the lowest capacity and birth are generally found to be more frequently the dupes of riches and vanity than those who have some claims from family, and some from talents. Of all those who have lately made a figure by leaping from the shop to the splendid mansion, and from competence of diet to the luxuries of an Eastern table; of all those whose "equipages shine like meteors, and whose palaces rise like exhalations;" the greater part will be found to have no claims to respect from intellectual worth, or from the fair pursuit of regular and honourable trade. To such men, therefore, it

becomes necessary to have recourse to extraordinary means, in order to produce ordinary effects. Conscious that their characters have no natural popularity, they have recourse to that species of quackery by which an artificial reputation may be raised, and, for a time, may be supported. Among other schemes, the ostentatious display of wealth in entertainments readily presents itself; their ignorance of such matters is easily supplied by the skill of a public cook and purveyor; and numerous guests are called together, to contemplate the elegant furniture, plate, and apparatus of a dinner or supper, while the host can boast of little else than the walls of the house; and knows that almost every article which attracted their curiosity or provoked their envy must be next day removed to furnish the house of another candidate for artificial popularity.

But this, however frequently practised, will not answer every purpose. Certain offices and honours are within reach, because in the gift of men whose suffrages may be purchased by money, or gained by delusion. The usual tricks of quackery are here employed to some advantage: the decent part of the publick is insulted by puffing which would disgrace the bills of a strolling company — but the purpose is answer-

ed, and the offices once held by men of reputation and talents, and the honours once bestowed upon faithful and long-tried services, are brought within the reach of needy adventurers, who are content to be well known to some, if they can conceal themselves from others whom it is of more importance to deceive.

If in this attempt to overthrow the bounds which have hitherto kept the ranks of society distinct, and to confound and mix all that ought to have been kept separate, we find the causes of Suicide, our wonder ought, in some measure, to subside. But there are inconsistencies in the system of ostentation which still want to be explained. Character is of so much importance to the existence of men in society, to their advancement, to their comfort, and their happiness, that life itself is not thought to be a superior object. When we hear, therefore, of men who have precipitated themselves into the grave, because shame made them weary of the present life, we are naturally inclined to wonder that the shame which did not prevent crimes should be so extremely averse to suffer for them. Yet such is the inconsistency into which men are led, when they have once determined to go through the scenes of human life without the proper foundation for their conduct. Such are

the consequences of those lax systems of morality which infidelity has introduced, and which are propagated, not so much by written theories on the subject of morals, as by an imitation of what is practised by others without inquiry or examination. The only check given to those lax moralists, whose object is their own interest, arises from the laws; and it is wonderful with what nicety they will "drive to a hair," as the sportsmen express it, to avoid the penalties of an Act of Parliament. Yet as the laws only are permitted to set limits to their ambition, their range is, in general, sufficiently extensive for their purpose; or if perchance they have been obliged to make free with a written statute, they have still their favourite *exit* in view; and if we may credit the verdict of the jury, although they are *mad*, they are at the same time wise enough to escape the hands of the public executioner.

As some have proposed remedies for the increasing crime of Suicide, it may be thought that the Projector ought not to close his paper without offering something of the same kind. But as I have already hinted that I consider this as no proper subject for the Legislature, it may be deemed presumption to put any inferior power in the place of our Lords and Commons.

All that I shall therefore add is, that whoever considers the artificial manners, the useless amusements, and the unprincipled ostentation, which prevail in the Metropolis; and with this, the increase, not only of gaming properly so called, but of speculations equally liable to the laws of chance, will not be much surprised if Suicide, which has lately been increasing, should still continue to increase. They will at least find that the causes now assigned have rather a better foundation in experience than what some writers on the subject have been pleased to assign. So very desirous are we to find fault with every thing but ourselves, that Suicide has been gravely ascribed to the variableness of our climate, the use of animal food, and even to the exhalations of the coals used as fuel. But if my Readers will seriously cultivate the principles of industry, morals, and contentment, founded upon what they find recorded in the Scriptures of eternal truth — if they will carefully avoid ambition, avarice, and ostentation, — if they will consider riches as more dangerous than useful to human happiness, and remember that coaches and equipages, lace and diamonds, are not essential to the felicity of a rational creature: if they suffer no passion to gain the ascendancy, and avoid the

common means by which the intellect is disturbed and disease promoted, I will venture to assure them, that the variations in the climate will produce no inconveniencies but what are within the power of remedy; that they may enjoy their roast-beef and pudding with cheerfulness and thankfulness, and dispel the cold of a Winter's evening with the best produce of Newcastle, without the least apprehension from any exhalations but those which vanity and ostentation produce.

THE PROJECTOR. N° 84.

July 1808.

"TO THE AUTHOR OF THE PROJECTOR.

"SIR,

"OF late years we have been favoured with some elaborate essays on Taste, the authors of which have endeavoured to establish certain general principles, and thus to introduce an uniformity of opinion in matters that are cognizable at this tribunal. But whether

it be that their attempts have failed from a want of understanding in the readers, or from a wilful neglect of this branch of polite education; or whether it be that uniformity of opinion is denied in all cases to mankind in this lower world; certain it is that our tastes are not yet regulated in such a manner as to produce one general standard. We cannot yet explain what it is that affects us with pleasure or disgust; nor have we been able to fix upon such elementary rules or instructions as may enable the young to acquire taste as readily as any other accomplishment.

"There is a class, indeed, and I believe a very numerous one, of persons who, without any very arrogant pretensions to taste, seem to enjoy the pleasure, or express the dislike, with which certain objects affect them, in a very homely way. When asked if they understand musick, poetry, or painting, they honestly confess their deficiency, but add, that 'they know what pleases themselves.' With this knowledge, be it little or much, they read a Poem, listen to a Concert of Musick, and visit an Exhibition of Pictures. From these they select what they like, and seem very indifferent to the opinions of others. Professed men of taste, however, who set up as arbiters, and as the

leaders of public opinion, disclaim all association with those who pretend to 'such likes and dislikes;' and by some means contrive to form laws for the regulation of their decisions, which must be either subscribed openly, or obeyed tacitly. Accordingly, we find in Poetry, Painting, and Musick, certain pieces and performances which we are bound to applaud or condemn, under the penalty of being classed among the vulgar, among persons of no taste, or among those who have not given up the pleasure of thinking for themselves. Some call this a *fashion*, and some a *rage*; but by whatever name it may be known, I have to complain to you, Mr. PROJECTOR, that it is a mighty expensive thing for parents.

"I have a family of two sons and three daughters; and against their filial behaviour, or general character, as times go, I have very little to object. My daughters, who were educated at a genteel boarding-school, were taught Musick; and when they began, not many questions were asked as to my opinion of the necessity of this branch of education. Excuses for doing what others do, generally run in a circle. My daughters, I was told, wished to learn Musick; and they wished to learn Musick, because the other young ladies at the

school wished to learn Musick; and the other young ladies at the school wished to learn Musick, because the mistress (I beg pardon, the *governess*) wished them to learn Musick; and the Musick-master wished them 'of all things' to learn Musick, because — and here we come round in our circle of causes and effects — because all the young ladies wished to learn Musick.

"Well — the proficiency my daughters made in this charming science did no discredit either to their teachers, or to their diligence and capacity. They have been repeatedly, and, as a fond father, I am bound to believe, very disinterestedly praised by the company who visit us, or whom we visit. In respect, therefore, of this matter, I have every reasonable evidence that my money has not been thrown away; which, to a calculating man, is a great consolation. Sometimes, it is true, I hint, that being very musical is not the way to get husbands; for I have observed, that when musical ladies become matrimonial, they find other employments more important than the piano, the harp, or the guitar. But let this pass. I was not sorry that my girls made as good a figure as their school-fellows. I am myself rather fond of Musick, and seldom hear it with so much sa-

tisfaction as when my daughters are the performers, because they are, if I may so speak, a part of myself. Here again, therefore, is no ground for complaint, but rather a sort of *prelude*, or *overture*, to the main grievance.

"There seems, Mr. PROJECTOR, to be something in the nature and construction of modern musical compositions, which, however consistent with the prevailing taste for variety, is at the same time extremely inconsistent with that œconomy which, as a prudent man, I wish to observe in the maintenance of my family. As all luxuries are now become necessaries, œconomy is as requisite in the one as in the other. But I am sorry to say, that with every attention to this domestic virtue, I find it very difficult to keep up with the vast quantity of new Musick every day published, and which is no sooner new than it becomes old, obsolete, and no longer fit to be played in the hearing of persons of taste. There is a fashion in musical compositions, which is as short-lived as in articles of dress and finery. I cannot exactly ascertain the time when it is proper that one fashion should give way to another; nor have I any skill in calculating the nativity of a new bonnet or a new song, in order to know how long they have to live, or whether they will

die a lingering or a violent death. Still less can I discover any reason why, soon after the Taste which presides in Bond-street has hit upon a becoming article, it should give way to one less so, merely because 'its time is up.' But I protest to you, Sir, and I appeal to all the young ladies your readers for the truth of my assertion, that a concerto lasts no longer than a pelisse; a cantata is no longer bearable than a tippet; and songs, sonatas, and cantabiles, are as short-lived as poke-bonnets, mantles, and half-handkerchiefs. To-day arrives a piece of Musick from the opera or the theatres, sung by a Catalani or a Billington. It must be excellent, because it is new; and accordingly it is played and sung, and hummed over and over again from morning to night; but, alas! a month hence where is it? or who would venture to ask for it in a polite company? It is then placed on the superannuated list; and I might as well shock the feelings of a party by requesting a solo of Handel, or expressing my good-will in favour of the Old Hundredth.

"Now, Sir, as I have ventured to compare pieces of modern Musick to articles of dress, in respect to their fleeting and perishable nature, I must in justice say that dress, however incessantly changing and changeable, is yet at-

tended with a much less expence, since any one article by a very trifling alteration may be turned into any other exactly suited to the prescribed fashion of the day. O! Sir, I could tell you many pretty stories about the œconomy of fashionable folks, in the regeneration of caps, bonnets, mantles, pelisses, cloaks, &c.; and how they can, with a very little needle and scissars-work, a little clipping and rounding, piecing and patching, stitching and welting, make things long or short, round or square, with trains or without trains, plain or Vandyke, braided or curled, hats or bonnets, &c. &c. in a most surprizing manner. But, Sir, our Musick is capable of no such saving alterations. We cannot draw patterns for cutting down a *concerto* into a *solo;* we have no wire-shapes for extending a *presto* to an *andante,* or by a little neat hemming give a *waltz* the appearance of a *symphony.* We cannot trim an *old ballad* into a *new canzona,* or *dye* an opera to make it more brilliant. No, Sir, the Musick-sellers have this advantage over the mantua-makers and milliners, that their customers, be they ever so œconomically disposed, can do nothing for themselves; or, by any ingenious contrivances or alterations, supply the place of the *spick-span.*

"Hence it comes to pass, Mr. PROJECTOR, that my daughters are every month and every week accumulating a library of obsolete musick, which they dare not place on the stand after a six-weeks' wear, without having some very unpleasant insinuations thrown out at the expence of their taste, which they, I am sorry to add, think the heaviest expence of all. At our house in the country, indeed, they will sometimes venture to play a tune which is perhaps half-a-year, or even a whole year old, to please our Vicar. The Vicar is really a very good man, and is reputed to have a very pretty taste in other matters; but, owing to his distance from London, he falls off miserably in this matter, and has often never heard of a new Air until it has sunk in oblivion. Now, Sir, I need not represent to you, that all this conformity to the ruling taste is attended with a very considerable expence, which I have no means of recovering. Old Musick, every shopkeeper tells me, is a mere drug; and no wonder, when it grows old so soon.

"I have troubled you, Sir, with this complaint of mine, because, although common enough, it has not, as far as I know, been represented by any of your predecessors. I must leave it to your better judgment to determine,

whether you can interpose in behalf of parents who are obliged to keep bands of Musick, or whether you will order my petition to speak for itself among the rest of the remonstrances recorded in your Lucubrations.

"I am, Sir,

"Yours, &c. PARENTALIS.

"P. S. I may briefly notice, that Fashion has extended its perishable influence even to the instruments themselves. I am old enough to remember spinets and harpsichords; but, alas! where are they to be heard, unless in the shops of the old brokers? My daughters began with a common piano, which cost no more than twenty-five guineas — next year they were obliged to have one with additional keys, price thirty-five; and soon after I submitted to a *Grand*, which I had a pennyworth at ninety, it being the property of a lady, who, having married, had no farther occasion for the instrument. For some weeks past, they have been throwing out hints about a *Grand upright*, with pedal, tambourine, and drum. This has awakened me a little to the main chance; although it is not improbable that they will prevail, as, in order to lessen the expence, they seem willing to give up Brighton. These are

hard times, Mr. PROJECTOR, for people that have good ears."

I have submitted my Correspondent's letter, agreeably to his desire, but with no very sanguine hopes that a remedy can be provided: perhaps the request of the writer of the following letter may be more easily complied with.

"TO THE AUTHOR OF THE PROJECTOR.

"SIR,

"IT is generally said, that every country undertands its own language best, and that the natives of any country, however illiterate they may be in other respects, have many advantages over a foreigner, in acquiring the true meaning of their language. But, common as this maxim is, I have some doubts whether it be universal, and liable to no objection; and I have some fears that we are fast hastening to render our language as puzzling to ourselves as to foreigners. I might give you a very considerable list of words to prove this, and to prove the extraordinary and wanton liberties we take with the meaning of them; but I shall, for the present, confine myself to two or three, which occur so frequently, that we cannot go to dinner without them.

"The words I allude to, Sir, are *punctually, precisely,* and *exactly,* or, by way of circumlocution, *to a minute,* which expresses the same meaning; but what that meaning is I have long been at a loss to understand, and you may suppose I despair of finding any explanation, when I defy any man who has ever received a dinner-invitation, to help me through my difficulty. To illustrate the matter, we will suppose that the hour of appointment is *five* punctually. Now, Sir, I have known, within the short space of a year, that *five* punctually extended to half-past five, six, half-past six, and so on till eight, every one of which periods I have been repeatedly taught to consider as five *punctually,* with all its synonyms of *precisely, exactly,* and *to a minute.* The consequence of taking such liberties with the plain, obvious, and right-antient meaning of words is, that many choice dishes have been spoilt, many sweet tempers lost, many stout appetites damaged by relaxation, and a good quantity of patience completely worn out. You will, therefore, Mr. PROJECTOR, very much gratify your Readers, if you will touch upon the difference between the genuine meaning of words, and the capricious latitude allowed to them, at so important a crisis as the dinner-

hour; and be pleased also to inform us, by whose authority it is, that the words above-mentioned are not to be understood in the letter, but in the spirit; all which tends to the great detriment of the stomach, and to bring clocks and watches into contempt.

"I am, Sir,

"Yours, &c. ESURIENS."

THE PROJECTOR. N° 85.

"——— Deluded long
By Fancy's dazzling opticks, these behold
The images of some peculiar things
With brighter hues resplendent, and pourtray'd
With features nobler far than e'er adorn'd
Their genuine objects." AKENSIDE.

August 1808.

ADDISON and others, who have treated on the Pleasures of Imagination, have confined their attention to the regions of Taste, and seem to be of opinion that Fancy is exercised on no other topicks than what administer to our per-

ceptions of the grand, the sublime, and the beautiful. But there appears reason to suppose that Poets and Poetical Criticks are not the only persons who indulge themselves in the pleasures of Imagination; and that, in fact, Imagination enters very deeply not only into our pleasures, but our serious business. Indeed, if we examine with attention the greater part of those pursuits in which mankind are most earnest, we shall find that they consist full as much of fancies as of realities, and that men who would be thought very anxiously busy in their researches, are seeking after something which is ideal to all but themselves.

It will perhaps require very few arguments to prove that those who have most leisure and inclination for pleasure, may be reckoned among the sons, or rather the slaves of Imagination. Whether they soar to the sublime heights of an opera or a masquerade, or descend to the more humble gratifications of an ass-race or a boxing-match, the pleasure which they actually receive bears so little proportion to what they anticipated, that we may surely consider them as acting under the influence of a lively imagination. Public amusements, indeed, yield so little real satisfaction, that if they were not to be heightened by the most extravagant

flights of invention, they would scarcely be tolerated; and, accordingly, the managers of such exhibitions take care to keep in pay a set of fertile geniuses, usually called Puffers. It is the business of these gentlemen to promise the spectators more than they have it in their power to place before them, and a degree of complete satisfaction which they are conscious they cannot provide. Whether, therefore, the proffered gratification be a show, a procession, a jaunt, a rout, a ball, or only a day's pleasure, the share that Fancy has in the preparation is always very considerable, and may, by those who are curious in calculations, be exactly estimated by the *quantum* of disappointment which follows.

But the effects of a lively imagination are not confined to those whose days are exclusively devoted to pleasure, a thing in itself quite fanciful, or to those who have no visible means of rendering existence tolerable, but by contriving how to dispose of a quantity of time in the most expeditious manner. If we look into the different departments of human pursuit, business, ambition, avarice, or vanity, which, however apparently contradictory, are *trades* very often carried on by the same person, we shall discover a fancy continually at work to

improve shadows into substances, to magnify trifles into matters of importance, and to represent some great good as accessible, although never known to be attained. With respect to avarice only, surely no man, and no poet can be pronounced more the creature of imagination, or be supposed to soar higher in his fanciful flights, than that singular being who amasses money with no other view than to say that it is in his possession; who desires no higher reward than to look at it, no greater talents than to count it, and who denies himself not only the luxuries but even the necessaries of life, that it may one day or other be reported that he died rich.

The ambition of those whom nature and education have determined to keep down, affords another instance. What indeed can be more flighty and whimsical than the conduct of an illiterate mechanick, who on the strength of a portion of riches, no matter how acquired, thrusts himself forward in that superior rank which requires knowledge, elegance of manners, and liberality of mind, and who, when he has reached a public office which he disgraces, looks round the world with a smile of victory and satisfaction, and imagines that he is respected and honoured! Neither Shakspeare

nor Milton ever struck out a train of images more truly original, or ever took a bolder flight into the regions of Fancy, than the man who, after having scraped riches together by every method that entails contempt, and who at the same time has the common sense to know that dishonesty and impudence are unpopular vices, yet permits his imagination to flatter him, and, to all appearance, actually believes, that he has hearty admirers, sincere friends, and disinterested supporters.

In these examples, we see how much more potent Imagination may be in matters of business than of taste, and what a felicity it must be to those who pursue the crooked paths to riches and preferment, that among their other whims they can actually fancy themselves going on in the straight and honourable road. Such characters ought to be very thankful that they are thus happily endued with the knack of supposing and fancying; for a man who is despised because he does every thing that is despicable, who has not the art to conceal what has rendered him infamous, and whose character is laid open by every means of exposure, if he did not possess an imagination which reverses all this in his own eyes, would certainly be driven to terminate his career by a desperate

hand. A dull matter-of-fact man, who attempts to be a rogue, but has not been regularly bred to the trade, and who has neither got rid of shame nor fear, ought to be constantly watched, lest he prove a suicide; but, on the other hand, a man of accomplishment in what is nefarious, whose fancy represents to him that censure is unjust abuse, and conviction mere rumour, is in no danger of falling by his own hands. On the contrary, that event has been generally brought about by strangers, expressly appointed for the purpose, and who admit nothing that is imaginary into their proceedings.

Of all the flighty humourists of the present day, DOLOSUS is most remarkable for the whimsical fancy of dwelling continually on the importance of a man to himself. His name, as a fraudulent dealer, has been known in every court of justice in the kingdom for the last forty years; but such is the stretch of his fancy, that he not only imagines, but would, if required, represent himself, upon oath, as a man of the utmost purity of intention and integrity of action. Such a flight, however, cannot be taken at once; there must be something preparatory to it, and therefore his fancy first persuaded him, that notwithstanding his many

virtues and unimpeachable honesty, he had the misfortune to be persecuted by a series of fastidious judges, censorious barristers, and uncharitable juries, in such a manner, that he has lost every cause in which he was concerned, yea, even those in which his imagination suggested that he was most secure; and all of them with as much disgrace as legal decision and public opinion could inflict.

Yet DOLOSUS has none of those flights of fancy which, amounting to a "fine phrenzy," might perhaps procure him the favourable verdict of lunacy. He is perfectly well acquainted with the distinctions between right and wrong, and has actually been known to prefer the former on some occasions, where it happened to contribute to his interest. Nor is he less acquainted with that fixed and unalterable opinion of mankind upon which character depends. But such are the consolations he derives from imagining his own eyes open, and those of every other man shut; that he walks the street with the erect step of an honest man, and is as much a stranger to shame as if such a feeling had never been planted in the human breast. How far, therefore, beyond the usual flights of poetry must that fancy stretch, which can induce him to be easy under the indignities

which he is at the same time conscious he deserves, and yet to complain that he is persecuted by unjust accusations, and pestered with undeserved reproaches?

There is another class of men who seem to derive all the comforts of their situation from that extraordinary stretch of imagination which rejects experience, and believes that what has been the lot of others will never happen to them. It is evident that this must be resolved into the workings of Fancy, since no other power of the mind can possibly produce the same effect. I allude now to the gentlemen whose business (for I think it cannot well be called pleasure) lies in gaming, and who are seen to pursue that business through the greater part of life. Their comforts must surely be imaginary, for they have neither memory nor judgment to plead as encouragements. Although convinced that the usual progress of the Gamester is in a direct line towards disgrace and ruin, they imagine that by some special licence they are exempted from the usual consequences of infatuation. They see at the termination of their *vista*, the prison, the pistol, the dose of arsenick, and the gibbet, as plain as visible objects can be represented; yet they either consider these articles as moral

fictions, or, as provided for every body but themselves.

There is, perhaps, a yet larger class, formed out of all ranks of life, whose imagination continually suggests to them that they shall live for ever, that disease and death are things that belong to their neighbours, or that sometimes occur merely to produce paragraphs and funerals, wills and obituaries. The fancy of some of these immortals, instead of growing duller as they advance in life, which is said to be the case with even the most ingenious of our poets, becomes in them more lively, and while they are puffing at the dying embers, their imagination makes them believe that they are perpetuating the original blaze. Among other flights incident to this class, they consider the debilitating infirmities of age as forming an admirable junction and pleasing alliance with the vigorous frolicks of youth. And surely that imagination must be extremely prolific which can bring back to age and decrepitude all the hopes and fears of the tender passion, with the gallant idea that feebleness is irresistible, that rheumatic twitches are indications of gaiety, and that the language of the eyes is never so expressive as when they twinkle in a palsied head. We find nothing in the most extra-

vagant of our poets more bold, wild, and out of nature, than the amorous pursuits and asthmatic addresses of a dropsical Lothario.

"So wither'd stumps disgrace the sylvan scene,
No longer fruitful, and no longer green:
The sapless wood, divested of the bark,
Grows fungous, and takes fire at every spark."
COWPER.

But to quit the characters who have carried the pleasures of Imagination as far as it is probable they can be made to go, it may be questioned whether dress, that object of importance in the gay and fashionable world, may not be indebted for its principal attractions to Imagination. For this reason it is that some modes and shapes are called *fancy* dresses, as being more indebted to the fancy of the maker and of the wearer, than to the intrinsic beauty of the form. But what renders it more certain that dress ranks among the pleasures of Imagination is, its being so continually liable to change. What is graceful, becoming, and beautiful in this month, may, in the next, become odious, frightful, and shocking, unless perchance it should be worn at those distances from town, and in those unrefined regions, where reason is allowed some small influence

over imagination. It cannot be denied that, even in these days, there are some obscure individuals who are more under the controul of Cocker's Arithmetick than of the monthly laws of the Beau Monde, and who are apt to consult their glass and their purse at the same time. Yet such unenlightened barbarians are not wholly deprived of the powers of imagination, since they can fancy that to be becoming, which Bond-street has declared to be execrable. This, however, I am aware, is to be classed among the most melancholy instances of disordered imagination and perverted vision; and consequently is entitled, if not to toleration, at least to some small degree of pity.

How far the imagination is concerned in matters of Love and Marriage, I would rather submit to the consideration of my readers, than attempt a sober discussion on points so delicate. That there is some small scope for fancy in these cases, appears from the writings of the whole tribe of Poets, from the earliest times to the present. Poets, indeed, have taken Love so much under their care, that plain prose is scarcely ever admitted in the progress of a courtship; and the very first step, on the part of the lover, is to *take* a *fancy* to his mistress. But whether extravagant figures, bright images,

high metaphors, and other flights of imagination, might not be omitted with considerable advantage in such cases, is likewise to be reserved for the consideration of my Readers. It is not to be doubted, that in whatever proportion these articles have been accumulated before marriage, there frequently occurs, at no great distance from the honey-moon, a sensible decrease in the spirituality of Goddesses and Angels. The torments which fancy represented as excruciating, now become tolerable; irresistible charms cease to be dangerous to the beholder, and the flame burns with a prosaic dulness. Some of those ladies who have lately made so distinguished a figure in Westminster Hall, were once, I am assured, "Angels *ever* bright and fair," and were worshiped with all the rites which imaginary idolaters have decreed to ideal divinities.

It would not be difficult to prove, that the pleasures of Imagination have been extended to many other pursuits, in which men think themselves very rational and serious; nor would it be more difficult to demonstrate, that the disappointments with which Imagination punishes her worshipers, might be avoided, by making a fair estimate of the value of the objects pursued. Ambition, avarice, preferment,

vanity, and pride, are the topics on which fancy most generally riots, but which perhaps would appear unworthy of her flights, if their true value were ascertained. Whoever examines the nature of any of those objects on which his heart has been fixed, will probably find, that the felicity of the acquisition, and the bitterness of the disappointment, are equally imaginary.

THE PROJECTOR. N° 86.

September 1808.

"TO THE AUTHOR OF THE PROJECTOR.

SIR,

"YOUR venerable predecessors in Queen Anne's reign did not think it beneath them to take notice of matters pertaining to the Church, as far as respected a proper behaviour in that place; from which I draw two inferences, first, that it was then the fashion to go to church, and secondly, that a becoming demeanour in that place was thought worthy of public no-

tice. Now, Sir, as I have not such a bad opinion of the present age as to suppose that either of those practices are obsolete, I conceive that you will have no objection to introduce a few hints on the same subject, if I may trust the general tenour of your lucubrations. Having been long in the habit of going to church, and considering such habit as an indispensable obligation (an opinion which in my youthful days was not thought singular), I flatter myself that I am qualified by observation and experience to furnish you with such information as will be authentic, and may be acceptable. But, as I have no inclination to dictate to you in your proper province, or to set up for a general reformer, I prefer throwing the few observations I have to offer into a form which I hope will be thought respectful and polite to all parties concerned. I have good reason to suppose that the dictatorial manner will have no chance to succeed in a case where it is not in our power to follow it up with any degree of effectual discipline or lasting controul. Be pleased, therefore, Mr. PROJECTOR, to inform your readers that what I have got to say is submitted with all due deference to the opinion of those who may happen to think otherwise.

"I would, then, observe, in the first place, that the compilers of the Book of Common Prayer, having prefixed a General Confession and Absolution to the morning and evening service, there appears no very urgent reason why the people should not come to church until a considerable time after those prayers have been put up. But I shall not enlarge on this part of my subject, because it would probably lead me into a long and perhaps unpleasant dissertation on indolence. I am aware that many entertainments which promise excess and midnight revelling, are appointed purposely to be held on Saturday, because Sunday is accounted a *Dies non*, and therefore a few hours may be borrowed from it, 'without loss of time or hindrance of business.' I allow also, that what I complain of may not be practised out of any particular disrespect to the church service, but merely as a part of that general law which enjoins that all appointments should be kept *late*, or, in other words, that no person pretending in any degree to exist in genteel life should ever be *in time* on any occasion whatever. Sanctioned, therefore, as this practice is by the highest authorities, it would ill become me to object to it, if I did not apprehend that the advocates for lateness

have forgot that there is a material difference in the two cases, which ought to suggest a different practice. If a party, for example, determine to keep a dinner engagement as late as possible, they have the satisfaction of knowing that the rest of the company must wait for them, and the dinner be nearly spoiled by the delay. But in the case now before us, the clergyman is under an obligation to begin at a fixed hour, and there is, I believe, no instance of putting back the prayers in compliment to those who are absent. Whether, if the same punctuality were enjoined in other engagements, any of the party would be willing to give up the first course, or be content to pop in one by one when the dinner is half over, I leave to their sober consideration, and proceed to other matters.

"When, for any reason, persons are detained until the service is one third, or one half over, it is not absolutely necessary that they should, immediately on entrance, inform their friends why they were detained. The Rubrick has not appointed that the clergyman should make a stop for this purpose; and if he does not, there must be a clashing of subjects not of the most reverent kind. I do not say that apologies for such delays are unnecessary; but it is the

general opinion that, if made in this way, they are not made in the proper time, or to the proper person.

"There being in most cases a sufficient space allowed, either before going, or after returning from church, to make bows, throw nods, exhibit curtsies, and exchange compliments; these, it is presumed, may be dispensed with during the psalms or lessons, even if the curate's voice should not happen to be louder than the voices of two or three persons talking in a pew.

"As disputes respecting hassocks, sometimes of a very serious kind, will peradventure occur, especially where those conveniencies have been mislaid or misplaced either by design or accident; all such disputes, particularly if carried on with a peculiar elevation of the voice, and certain angry motions of the head, may be very safely adjusted before the service begins, nearly as well as during the prayers, unless where it is necessary to assert one's dignity, by drawing public attention.

"If any person comes from a considerable distance, he may be cordially forgiven, if he does not begin an account of his journey the moment he takes his seat. The violence of the shower, the identical tree he stood under,

the starting of his horse at the lightning, the behaviour of the woman at the Bear's Head, or the man at the turnpike-gate, are all matters capable of being postponed without injury to the feelings of devotion or the powers of narration.

"Those who happen to have a voice peculiarly harsh and disagreeable, are respectfully requested to observe that they afford very little gratification to the hearers around them, by repeating the prayers in a louder voice than any one else; and some part of this intimation is particularly recommended to those who think they can sing.

"If Mrs. Jenkyns sports a new bonnet, that does not become her face at all, or Mrs. Tomkins's fine lace-veil be discovered during the sermon (although it be well known that she bought it of Lady Spendthrift's woman), there is no immediate necessity for disturbing any part of the congregation by remarks on those objects, or even by wondering where they get the money to pay for them. It is the opinion of very sensible persons that all matters of debtor and creditor may be advantageously discussed during the week.

"When children are introduced, it has been supposed that it would be an improvement

to teach them how to behave, especially as sleeping, snoring, and squalling, are amusements which might as well be enjoyed at home. There they would create much less disturbance to those who are of opinion that the quiet of a whole congregation is of more importance than the indulgence of one child, although it may be "the prettiest dear" that ever was spoiled.

"If a new-married couple enter the church, and it be absolutely impossible not to stare at them, and point them out to others who happen not to know them, their characters may be spared until after the prayer against 'envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness,' is fairly got rid of. There will be time enough then to wonder how he should marry such a dowdy creature, or how she should think of a tradesman, when her father left her such a fortune!

"Simpering and smirking behind a fan, yawning in the folds of a fine handkerchief, looking every way but at the preacher, whispering every thing that comes uppermost, and smiling at something that 'came in one's head that very moment,' are not ranked by the ablest Divines among the infallible symptoms of devotion, even if the clerk should make a

blunder, the beadle let drop his staff, a hat fall over the gallery, a dog bark in the aile, or any other occurrence take place of so much more importance than what is going forward in the desk and pulpit.

"Although the clergyman be a bachelor, it is not indispensably necessary that every eye should be scrutinizing his person, and every speculation be exhausted on his probable choice of a wife. The looks he throws to Miss Longfort's pew may be merely accidental, and there is no occasion to whisper that he visits the widow lady in the Grove, when that and a thousand similar reports may be circulated loudly for six days together.

"It is a decided case in the ecclesiastical court, that a Sunday newspaper is no part of the furniture of the Clerk's desk, or the Churchwarden's pew, even if it contains the preceding night's Gazette, and it 'was just put into his hand.' As to the Overseer's anxious inquiries about the Russian fleet at the vestry-door, they may as well be postponed; nor does there seem sufficient time, during the voluntary, to land an army at Naples, or any part of Italy.

"Those who indulge themselves with a nap during the sermon, are respectfully informed that the pews were not built for that express

purpose; and that sleeping, in the opinion of some very well-informed persons, is not a very striking proof of devotion, nor would be for a moment attempted or allowed in any other public place.

"As to colds caught in church, which have been of such duration as to keep the patient away for nearly half a year after the cure was fully accomplished, I have been at some pains and expence to consult the Faculty, who assure me that church colds always produce this effect; but that dramatic colds, Vauxhall rheumatisms, and ball-room hoarsenesses, are never attended by similar consequences. They add, however, that as to all the modes of cure, and all the symptoms upon dissection, the disorder appears in both cases to be the same; only that church coughs and colds, from the peculiar cautions adopted, and the care of the patient not to be caught a second time, have always been more lenient.

"Those who cannot sit but in a particular seat, or kneel but on a particular hassock, and who enter into very sharp dialogues on Mrs. Early, who, forsooth, has taken the upper part of the pew, or Mrs. Fussock, who takes up the room of three good-sized people, are not supposed to be animated by the spirit which ought

to prevail in a place exclusively appointed for public worship, instead of private humours.

"The impertinence of a pew-opener, who may happen to place her customers without a sufficient attention to the laws of precedence, and who is less attentive to heraldic arrangement than to the difference between a quarterly half-crown and a shilling, has often been a matter of serious complaint, inward vexation, and outward vociferation. Nevertheless, in the opinion of many eminent Divines and Casuistical Professors, it is not allowed to be a full and sufficient reason for spoiling the temper, or distracting the attention, unless in cases where temper and attention appear to exist in very small quantities.

"There are few things better worth remembrance than this very simple position, that a man can be in only one place at a time. Those, therefore, who happen to go to church, are requested so to arrange their thoughts as not to appear to be every where but where they are, talking of every thing but what proceeds from the desk and pulpit, and thinking of a dozen things which belong to a dozen places, which they have visited, or may visit during the week.

"Disputes about dignity and consequence, the upper end or the lower end of the pew,

sitting with the back or the front to the preacher, the imprescriptible right to a drawer for books, or a peg for a hat, &c. ought to be adjusted in some court instituted for the purpose, and before judges duly qualified to lay down the law in matters of such infinite importance. The Book of Common Prayer, the Book of Canons, and the Homilies, are very unfortunately silent as to points of *etiquette;* and it never appears to have entered into the heads of their authors that persons may come to church for no other apparent purpose than to wrangle with one another.

"On returning from church it seems not very material what subject is taken up first, provided it has no very intimate connexion with the subject of the preacher's discourse, which is always to be left behind.

"It is not absolutely necessary to stop in the church, either in the porch or the pew, to adjust the ceremonial of a visit, or to discuss the last night's play; and by a parity of reasoning, articles of dress, singularities of manner, and other discoveries which have been made during the service, are not necessary to be commented on immediately on the blessing being pronounced, especially in churches which are not of such an immoderate length that a secret will

be ready to burst before the party gets vent. Some persons indeed have the happy knack of getting out of a church as rapidly as if they were endeavouring to escape pursuit. But this is scarcely thought requisite, even if they must run across to inquire after Mrs. Whimsical's rheumatism, or step aside to know the state of Mrs. Daffy's bowels, or, what is still more important, and makes many long for the blessing, that they may be certain whether Major Sturgeon has taken the white house on the Green, or if it be true that one of the Miss Smiths has run away with Mr. Johnson's eldest son?

"I have thus, Sir, pointed out some particulars in which I have the misfortune to differ from the parties alluded to; but I hope I have offered my opinion with all the respect that is due, and that it will not suffer by any mistakes or errors in point of fact or reasoning that may have been committed by

"Your humble servant

"and correspondent,

"GILES GENTLE."

THE PROJECTOR. No. 87.

"Plus oneris quantum veniæ minus." HOR.

October 1808.

THERE are few of my predecessors who have not extended their speculations to the weighty concerns of Novels and Novel Reading; and the arguments which can be advanced for or against this species of amusement have been discussed, perhaps as fully as is necessary, although not with so much success as could have been wished. Something, however, appears yet to require our consideration, by way of apology for Novel Writers, who seem to me to labour under peculiar difficulties, are more strictly under the controul of the publick than any other class of authors, and meet with less compassion and respect. The publick, indeed, seem of late disposed to thrust them out of the rank of writers, and to consider them as a species of mechanicks, working upon such materials as plots, fables, sentiments, incidents, and dialogue, and bound to perform a certain

quantity of this work in a given time. If I can, therefore, by exhibiting the unfortunate case of these ladies and gentlemen "to a humane and generous publick," remove any part of that disrepute into which they have fallen, I hope they will not be loth to testify their gratitude, by dedicating the next new Novel to "Their benevolent Friend and Patron the PROJECTOR."

In the first place, then, I conceive that the hardships Novel-Writers suffer from their merciless persecutors the Reviewers and Periodical Criticks, arise, in a great measure, from the extraordinary demand there is for the article, before it can reasonably be expected to have undergone the due preparation. And here, by-the-bye, is the wonderful difference between a Novel-Writer and a Historian. The former must create every thing; or, as a mechanick would say, must not only grow the raw material, but form it afterward into the shape of heroes and heroines, incidents, plots, &c. The Historian finds all this ready made, and would undertake to execute a History of England from the time of Julius Cæsar to the Peace of Amiens, before a poor Novel-Writer could give a decent account of Sir George and Clarinda from the

meeting at Brighton to the marriage in Grosvenor-square.

But to return to the demand for Novels. Thirty or forty years ago, about a dozen Novels was the quantity usually published *per annum;* and however small this may now appear, such was the state of our boarding-schools and our circulating libraries, that it was found adequate to the consumption of the country. Neither was it expected that even the whole of this small number should be the produce of England. A certain proportion of French materials was allowed to be imported, and either manufactured into an entire piece, or incorporated with English stuff so as to produce a pleasing mixture. Still the whole number, whether imported from abroad, or the growth of our own country, were composed or compiled by individuals who lived independent, and worked at such hours, and in such humours, as were most suitable to them. In their productions, therefore, whatever other defects might be visible, there could be no pretence for crudities, or errors of haste; nor did it appear that any person's materials were exhausted by over-working. There was very little altering, botching, repairing, or disguising of old articles

to make them appear new. The writer (for he still had this title) was under no necessity to seek either amusement or bread, either fame or beef, in the regions of fiction, if he found himself otherwise disposed to employ his time; and as he seldom wrote unless when he had some small degree of inclination, his performances were generally executed in a workmanlike manner; not perhaps of the finest *fabrique*, but still not a servile imitation of what had been seen just before. Such were the Richardsons, Fieldings, and Smolletts of former days.

It was unfortunate, however, for Novel-Writers, as well as for Novels themselves, that what it was hoped would have promoted and dignified the art, in a few years tended directly to obstruct and degrade it: and here again we are forced to compare the Mechanick with the Genius, although at the expence of the latter. It sometimes happens in writing, as in other manufactures, that an increased demand is of detriment rather than of advantage to the article. The first of every invention is the best. As soon as it becomes a profitable article, it degenerates in quality: a number of slight or clumsy imitations are brought into the market; which, being sold at an inferior price, in time carry away all the profits; while the publick,

instead of discouraging such trumpery, and waiting until better shall be produced, assume the singular opinion, that bad is better than none. — Such has been the case with Muslins and with Novels. No sooner had the latter become a creditable and advantageous species of writing, than the usual love of variety took possession of the publick; and the demand for Novels increased so much, that in the space of fifty years above three thousand of them passed from the booksellers' to the trunkmakers' shops with astonishing rapidity; and what was more extraordinary, this love of variety became most urgent when experience shewed that the same thing only could be procured. But this was not the only evil. That the publick might be assured of a regular supply of sameness, the late Messrs. Noble of Holborn, and other Messrs. in our own times, set up regular manufactories, and built warehouses, becoming thereby a sort of Novel-Factors, the middle men between the Writer and Reader, and more intent on their own profits than on the credit and amusement of the other parties. These purveyors, commissaries, and contractors, who would order a score of Novels for the winter, as a poulterer would order a score of geese for Michaelmas, bound themselves to supply the

market with a perpetual variety; and it is supposed have often imitated other factors and purveyors of the necessaries of life, by forestalling and regrating, and especially mixing and adulteration; and as many tricks have been played with title-pages in one market, as with samples in another. In this way, then, we have an apparent increase of the article in proportion to the demand, while the consumers are perpetually complaining of its degeneracy. I am assured by an eminent dealer in the article, who not only lives at the Bear-Key of Romance, but also regulates the Mark-Lane of Fiction, that the average number of Novels, for some time past, has been one hundred *per annum*: and, what is yet more extraordinary, he assures me that the most of these, with every advantage they could derive from listlessness and idleness, from bad taste and sickly appetite, from rainy days and watering-places, have not been found equal to the consumption of a very few weeks.

By what means so great a supply is procured, I am not so much in the secret as to be able to state with precision, except that the whole is now attempted to be carried on with all the regularity of a manufacture, and that it gives bread in moderate quantities to a number of

men and women who are not able to turn their hands to any useful and honest employment. That it gives more, cannot perhaps be affirmed, for the master-manufacturers inform us, that as the demand is quick, and the fashion perpetually fluctuating, the slightest materials must be mixed up, and no mechanicks employed but those who can work with the greatest possible expedition, and be content at the same time with the smallest possible wages. Their paymasters also plead, that this does not proceed from any parsimony on their part; and it is certain that the article itself exhibits no proof of any extraordinary labour, either of hand or head. The reason, therefore, assigned is, that whether they work slight or substantial, there is an incurable tendency in the article to run into second-hand, and a Manchester cotton cannot go sooner out of fashion than a modern Novel.

When, therefore, we take all these circumstances into consideration, we are not to be surprised that the manufacturers of Novels have been of late so frequently checked by the severity of Reviewers and Criticks, who look upon themselves as the guardians of invention and genius, taste, elegance, and novelty, and will not suffer imitators of such valuable articles

to pass with impunity. Yet these arbiters of merit, besides what has already been advanced, ought to take another circumstance into consideration, namely, that the incidents and plots of which Novels are composed must soon be exhausted (if indeed they be not exhausted already), provided the demand for the article shall go on increasing. Some hope great things from the ports being opened at a general peace; but I am credibly informed, that the hardships of which we are complaining, and the scarcity of incident and plot, sentiment and language, are felt in as high a degree in every part of the Continent. Indeed, if the lovers of peace have no other motive to animate their prayers, than that we may have a supply of Romances, they may as well preserve their usual indifference to the desolation of Europe.

Cases of distress and times of scarcity will, however, call forth extraordinary exertions; and on certain occasions, when the trade of fiction has been more than ordinarily dull, our manufacturers have hit upon temporary expedients, which have been of considerable service. A few years ago, for example, a very seasonable supply was afforded by the introduction of castles and ghosts, but it was soon discovered that castles and ghosts could not escape the

usual fate of all ingenious inventions. Hundreds of imitators and quacks started, who boasted that their castles were more ruinous, dark, and gloomy, and their ghosts more bloody and frightful, than any hitherto exhibited to the longing eyes of tender sensibility. Robbers, banditti, and murderers by profession, were, at the same time, brought into fashion, with all their pleasing accompaniments of daggers, poison, stillettos, dungeons, iron grates, &c.; but here again we were doomed to the miseries of multiplication, and in a short time the readers complained that the bloodiest murders were dull and uninteresting, and that the perpetual clanking of chains was no longer sufficient to keep them awake.

The truth, I am afraid, is, that the world of fiction is not so extremely abundant in variety as some have been inclined to suppose. Experience has proved that the disappointments of lovers are not inexhaustible, and that parents cannot be cruel, ravishers impudent, and tender hearts broken in more ways than are already to be found in circulating libraries. Multiplication is not variety; and we get nothing by exhibiting two ghosts, or two castles, instead of one, except that familiarity which abates the

terror that such objects were originally intended to excite.

As to the attempts which have been made to borrow from the real world a few incidents to enliven the efforts of imagination, it has been found that such supplies are too limited in their nature to produce any very great effect on the market. The introduction of diseases was at one time accounted a lucky thought; but, unfortunately, our diseases have very little in them of the romantic or the sentimental. If we copy them exactly from real life, we shall infallibly produce effects that, however appropriate, are yet exceedingly vulgar. There are even some, the very names of which are anti-sentimental. We can have no sympathy for agues, tooth-aches, or bowel complaints. Broken limbs, indeed, are still preserved, and spirited horses are trained for the purpose of starting near precipices, or taking fright near rivers. A hero or heroine thus mangled, if within sight of each other, may be introduced with some degree of etiquette; and while a leg is set, a heart may be lost. But one fracture so nearly resembles another, that unless we can contrive some method of bringing about the accident more extraordinary than has yet been devised, the chirurgical part of a love adven-

ture will produce no more effect than the casualties of an hospital related in the style of a newspaper.

In cases, therefore, where a fracture, either simple or compound, is not sufficient to prevent the opposition of flinty-hearted parents, lower the jealousy of rivals, soften the asperities of rich old uncles or guardians, and prevent those dreadful and complicated misunderstandings, which often protract matters to a third and fourth volume, it has of late been usual to attempt a reconciliation by means of a brain-fever. It has already been remarked, that the first thought of every thing of the kind is always the best; and therefore, although the dangers of disappointed love are still frequently averted by bringing the hero or heroine near death's-door, or the gate of St. Luke's, yet there is a sameness in our deliriums, which have brought them into disrepute, and seem to confirm what the poet Lee once said, "That any man might write like a fool, but a genius only could write like a madman." The mere introduction of broken and incoherent sentences and thoughts will not do the business, and are indeed too apt to interfere with the general style of the work.

I have thus sketched, I will not say a complete apology, but the outlines of an excuse for the barrenness of those compositions called Novels, Romances, and Tales. Whether it be possible to remedy the evil, must be left to the conjectures of my Readers, who also may consider whether that remedy is to be effected by lessening the demand, or increasing the value of the article. I do not, however, mean to submit this to the whole of my Readers, but only to the dealers in the article, because they must be the best judges of a matter, which perhaps none but themselves will ever think it worth while to investigate.

THE PROJECTOR. N° 88.

———————— "Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men:
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own."

COWPER.

November 1808.

"TO THE PROJECTOR.

"SIR,

"ALTHOUGH I have been a reader of your lucubrations from their commencement, I do not just now recollect whether you have touched upon a very common source of uneasiness in private life, which certainly merits your attention. If you have not, I hope the few hints which I now take the liberty to send, will at least serve as outlines, when you shall find leisure to handle the subject in your own way.

"There are no complaints more common than those which are directed against persons who are for ever meddling with matters in which they have little or no concern, and who

seem to be wonderfully attentive to every business but that which properly belongs to them. If this disorder, for such I may call it, seizes the master or mistress of a family, we may be sure that that family will be neglected, in their zeal to take upon them the management of their neighbours' concerns; and while they are employed in keeping a-going the machinery of others, their own is allowed to stand still.

"This whimsical taste seems to arise either from a consciousness of their own superiority, and consequently an opinion that they are better able to give advice than those to whom they offer it; or from a certain degree of curiosity, which can never be satiated unless they know what is going on in streets and houses where they have no concern or interest. It creates, therefore, newsmongers and gossips, public or private reformers, retailers of political intelligence or private scandal, sometimes adapted to the columns of a newspaper, and sometimes to the party at a tea-table. And those who indulge this longing after matters of less importance to themselves than to their neighbours, may be divided into two parties, male and female; the former superintending the affairs of an empire or a kingdom, the other confining

themselves to the transactions of a street or an alley.

"As to the regulators of political affairs, they have so often been treated by you and your predecessors, that I shall make no attempt to add to what has been observed on their extreme anxiety for the proper conduct of courts and ministers, while shops and warehouses are neglected. But the other class, confined to matters of a domestic kind, who are perpetually meddling with what does not belong to them, seem yet to demand your attention, because whatever mischief they occasion by their ill-timed interference, poor souls! 'they meant it all for the best, and would not have said one word, if they had thought that it would do harm.'

"I know not, Sir, how it happens; but, in all my intercourse in life, I have had repeated occasion to observe that nearly as much mischief is done by your well-meaning people, as by those who commit an injury with full purpose and intent. Whether it be, that those who mean well do not understand their own meaning, or whether they conceal what they mean from other people, it is certain that the schemes of no Projectors fail so frequently; and no class of friendly interferers meet with

less gratitude for the pains and trouble they have taken. This is truly unfortunate; and it is much to be lamented that such very wise persons, as all your meddlers are, should be thought to act ill at the very moment they profess to mean well.

"Yet perhaps it is not impossible to give some reasons that will account for their failures. Sometimes I have observed that, 'with the best intentions in the world,' they have communicated a secret which had better been concealed. The communication of this, while it was of no benefit to the party, served only to shew that they were intrusted with a piece of information which they could keep no longer without being suspected of that dreadful defect, 'the having nothing to say,' while every body else is talking on the subject. It likewise happens that the greater part of such well-meant communications end in the discovery of something rather defective in character, contrary to common opinion, or likely to interrupt some scheme or plan that would otherwise have been accomplished without suspicion. What is worse, when the matter has been communicated, 'with the very best intentions in the world,' with the most 'friendly design,' and in a 'most neighbourly manner,' there often occurs

a great difficulty in proving the truth of it. Hence the well-meaning author of the news is treated with very little respect, and very uncivilly requested 'to mind her own affairs;' a request, which, however apparently harmless and even useful, seldom fails to produce a considerable portion of resentment and indignation.

"But, affronting as this request seems to be, I cannot help being of opinion, Mr. PROJECTOR, that it is one of the most reasonable that can be made; and, if granted, would infallibly prevent the evils which I allude to in this letter. It would afford well-meaning people an opportunity of knowing when it is proper to be silent, and when to speak out boldly. The law on this subject seems to be very wise. If a person asks your opinion of another with whom he is likely to form a connexion, you may communicate all you know with freedom; but if, without any inquiry of this necessary kind, you run about from place to place telling all that is bad of any person, you are liable to an action for defamation, because you are punishing that person for offences of which he has perhaps repented, and meant no more to commit. Next, therefore, to the request, however uncivil, to 'mind your own affairs,'

another may with great propriety be made, 'Stay till you are asked,' which I have no doubt would be received with equal indignation.

"In thus exposing an evil, and proposing a remedy, I am aware that the latter will appear so very unpalatable, that many will think the cure worse than the disease. I know no two insults that can be offered more intolerable than being desired to 'mind our own business,' and to 'stay till we are asked.' But papers like yours, Mr. PROJECTOR, may be considered as a species of confidential communications made to persons who, if they think themselves pointedly addressed, may be saved the pain of blushing. I am not, therefore, without hopes that some may be prevented from officious meddling with the affairs of other people, merely from the fear of being requested to mind their own; and I shall make no apology for this intrusion on your labours, but subscribe myself,

"Your most obedient,

"A SMALL PROJECTOR."

I have inserted this Correspondent's letter, because it becomes me to make every suitable acknowledgment to a gentleman who offers to

lessen my monthly labour. I am not, however, without much apprehension respecting the reception which his letter may meet with from the parties principally concerned. The advice that a man should mind his own business, so nearly resembles a truism, that I hope my readers will not think me negligent, but rather respectful in omitting what appears to be so simple and natural. Still I am aware, with my Correspondent, that it is an advice of such a provoking kind, as to require to be given with the utmost circumspection, and with as much secrecy as possible. I may compare it to one of those medicines which should be delayed until every thing of a less violent and doubtful nature has been tried, and which are not administered at all without candidly informing the patient, or, if he be insensible, his friends, that, however violently it may operate, he has no other chance of recovery. Perhaps, indeed, it is to be lamented that any thing so simple should produce such dreadful effects; but it is with the mind as with the body. The operation of a medicine sometimes depends not so much on its own strength, or on the weight of the dose, as on the state of the stomach which receives it, on the length of time the patient has been diseased, and

other circumstances with which the physician has it not always in his power to be acquainted.

Minding one's own business, however, I can venture to say, upon the best authority, is one of those universal remedies which will apply in almost all cases, as well as in those hinted at by my Correspondent. There are few evils, political, moral, or domestic, which may not be traced to the practice of attending to every thing, except that in which we are concerned. It is likewise the opinion of some very well-informed persons that every man, of every station, has enough of his own to manage, if he set about it with zeal and perseverance; whereas those who expend their wisdom on the affairs of their neighbours, soon discover that they have very little left for their own wants, and often give the world reason to doubt whether they were in fact ever possessed of that useful article.

As to my Correspondent's second advice, of "staying till one is asked;" I hope he offers it with diffidence, and has very seriously considered what an embargo he is about to lay upon conversation, wit, and ridicule; how many a story he will spoil in the outset, and how many a loud laugh he is about to check. Is he aware of one dreadful consequence,

namely, that if some persons stay till they are asked, they may stay till they have lost their patience; or, what is worse, they may never be asked at all? Does he consider the mortification this will occasion to a mind pregnant with wise opinions and interesting anecdotes, to an imagination teeming with novelties, and that feels itself under no very serious obligation to adhere to veracity? If he has weighed all these circumstances, and is resolutely determined to abide by the consequences, he has my liberty to assert at all times, and on all occasions, that there would upon the whole be no harm if the busy were to take care of their own affairs, and the loquacious stay till they are asked.

THE PROJECTOR. N° 89.

"I do not love thee, Dr. Fell.
The reason why I cannot tell:
But I do not love thee, Dr. Fell."

December 1808.

THESE lines, which I have somewhere read, contain the whole essence of Physiognomy, and imply that whatever progress we endeavour to make in that science, over and above the general and vague opinion we are apt to form of a man from his countenance, is dangerous affectation, and leads to presumptuous conclusions. Whether I am exactly of this opinion, may perhaps appear from the following remarks lately made, when I was reviewing the many vast Projects presented to the publick within the last thirty years, and which have, somehow or other, been allowed to fall into oblivion. Such a review is very necessary to us Projectors, who, while we are amusing ourselves with the various productions of our inventive powers, are very ready to imagine that we are become the benefactors of the human race.

Some years ago, it may be remembered, the science of Physiognomy was imported into this country by certain agents of the celebrated Lavater, who were, or seemed to be, convinced that it would prove of great and lasting advantage to the nation. But whether we were at that time too busily occupied in other pursuits, or that the world was not then sufficiently enlightened to partake of the benefits of this science, it very soon began to decline, and is, I believe, at present known only to the chosen few who soar above common talents and common acquisitions. As I was one of the first to hail the arrival of this wonderful discovery, so I was one of the first to entertain suitable sentiments of the stupid indifference of mankind, who were content to pick up each other's characters in the old slow way, of facts, and proofs, and experience, when they might have read them with certainty in their faces in a few moments.

Indeed when we consider of how much we are ignorant, when we are ignorant of Physiognomy, it will ever remain a paradox, that a wise and thinking nation did not choose to cultivate a science laid down with such wonderful precision, and which promised to make every man, what no man has ever yet been.

"a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." That there were some who doubted its efficacy might have naturally been expected; but that no pains should have been taken by the disciples of Lavater to remove those doubts, is wholly unaccountable. At the abovementioned time, I took the liberty to suggest a plain and simple Project, which would have removed all impediments at a very small expence, and in a manner not only the most easy, but the most honourable for their great master. This was no other, than to raise a sum of money sufficient to defray the expences of bringing over Mr. Lavater to this country, and of maintaining him handsomely. In this country, where he allows that the best faces in Europe are to be found, he might have furnished persons of all descriptions with friends, husbands, wives, servants, and every sort of connexion, merely by looking at the candidates' features, and making such a selection of foreheads, eyes, noses, mouths, and chins, as might have prevented every disappointment, and provided each applicant with the very character he wanted. It is painful to think that we must study a man's character eight or ten years before we can decide upon it, and that he may, in spite of all our researches, turn out a rogue

in half the time; while our great Physiognomist could have settled the matter merely by the inspection of his face, or if he happened not to be at hand, of his portrait.

Why this suggestion of mine was not attended to, they must be answerable who neglected so fair an opportunity of verifying the knowledge of the greatest Physiognomist of modern times. I am yet unwilling to believe that parsimony had any share in the rejection of my scheme; but, suspecting that it had, I was prepared with another scheme to obviate it; namely, by prevailing upon Mr. Lavater to take orders, and procuring him the first vacant Bishoprick. It is still (although, alas! too late) delightful to contemplate what a judicious choice he would have been able to make in filling up the vacant offices of his cathedral, what discernment he would have shewn at his ordinations, and what labour would have been saved to his examining chaplains.

But, in truth, to what rank of life would not this science have been beneficial? In all the various appointments, for example, of Government, his Majesty, or those immediately under him, might have been enabled to make the happiest choice of persons capable of

filling each official department; not, as is too much the case at present, sometimes by chance, and sometimes by interest, but by such a judicious selection of foreheads, noses, and eyes, as bespoke the qualifications wanted, and accurately pointed out those who were destined by Nature for the Treasury, the Admiralty, the Ordnance, or any other offices, for which, as things now are, I am sorry to say it, many persons think themselves fit without any qualification at all.

To give an example of the utility of applying Physiognomy in the choice of men for high situations, such as First Lords, or Secretaries of State; Lavater has described a *forehead* fit for those personages. He says it must be one-third of the face in length, or that of the nose, and from the nose to the chin; the upper part must be oval or nearly square; the skin must be smooth, and wrinkled only when the mind is roused to just indignation (as when the French bulletins arrive) or deeply immersed in thought, and during the paroxysms of pain (as when the Opposition are particularly clamorous). He adds other particulars, which I shall here omit; but who does not see how easy it would be to appoint ministers of state and privy counsellors by such marks, if they

can be found in the candidates? or if not, what so easy as to advertise for them? The importance of a good head to a politician all are willing to confess; how valuable, then, the art which points out that qualification merely by an inspection of the outside?

But our great Physiognomist does not choose his eminent men merely by the forehead. Indeed, were that absolutely necessary, many inconveniences might arise in the application of this science to practice; particularly from the use of *wigs* and *tetes*, which in modern times have greatly obscured our fronts. But genius, talents, and virtues, are so plentiful in the face, that if we miss them in one feature, we are sure to find them in another. Lavater considers the *nose*, a feature which no nation has yet thought of covering, as a more infallible sign of greatness: and has actually given us the description of a nose which, he says, "is of more worth than a kingdom." As this acquisition would in all probability be of infinite importance either in Church or State, the Army or Navy, or any of the learned professions, I shall throw Lavater's description into the form of an Advertisement, partly with a view to exemplify the benefits of this science, had we not ungratefully discharged it from our

studies, and partly with a view that the person possessed of such a nose may know its worth.

"WANTED, a person with a nose whose length is equal to the length of the forehead, with a gentle indenting at the top. Viewed in front, the back should be broad, and nearly parallel, yet above the centre something broader; the bottom, or end of the nose, must be neither hard nor fleshy, and its under outline must be remarkably definite, well delineated, neither pointed nor very broad; the sides, seen in front, must be well defined, and the descending nostrils gently shortened; viewed in profile, the bottom of the nose should not have more than one-third of its length; the nostrils above must be pointed below, round, and have in general a gentle curve, and be divided into equal parts by the profile of the upper lip; the side, or arch of the nose, must be a kind of oval; above, it must close well with the arch of the eye-bone, and near the eye, must be at least half an inch in breadth.—Any person possessed of such a nose, may hear of something to his advantage by bringing it to, &c. &c. &c. &c."

From this specimen, there can be no doubt that if we had studied Physiognomy with half the zeal of our learned master, our newspapers

would have been filled with advertisements of this kind. Among other good effects of taking characters by the nose, the modesty of persons wanting situations would have been spared the shame of advertising their sobriety, honesty, and sweet tempers, as these qualifications would appear wherever they were permitted to shew their faces. The giving of characters, a duty which is seldom faithfully performed, either from pique or want of discernment, might have been dispensed with, each applicant carrying a certificate in his or her forehead, eyes, nose, or chin; and they would have been readily supplied with places, according as their masters had a confidence in one feature more than another. The keepers of Register Offices, too, who seldom know much more than the difference between a shilling and a half-crown, would, after a few lessons in this science, be enabled to supply their customers with features adapted to every department of menial service, from the lady's-maid to the scullion.

A yet more important benefit would have accrued from the science of physiognomy, had we not discarded it; namely, the banishing of those doubts and suspicions which we are so apt to entertain respecting the persons with

whom we deal or associate. These, it is well known, in the case of friendship, have become so tiresome, that many persons, particularly in fashionable life, are obliged to assemble and associate with all the friends they can procure, to the amount of many hundreds in a night, in hopes that some of them may answer their expectations.

This consideration alone, one should think, would have promoted the study of Physiognomy; and had we begun when Lavater's valuable works were first imported into this country, and established schools for reading faces instead of books, it is incalculable what progress we might have made before this time. How many friends might we have chosen from the oval shape of their foreheads! How many electors would have voted for a nose as long as the forehead! How many wives might have been preferred for having their mouths closed, which, Lavater tells us, indicates fortitude and courage, qualities which too many express by having their mouths open! And how many a pretty girl might we have chucked under the chin, merely because it projected, and because Physiognomy says that a projecting chin "marks something decided!"

There is, however, it must be allowed, a

trifling deficiency in this system, which is, perhaps, one of the reasons why it did not succeed so well as could be wished with the publick at large.—With all its advantages, it is not very happily adapted to the wants of people engaged in trade. It affords opportunities of selecting great men, warriors, statesmen, lawyers, &c. and of discovering mental powers and virtues. It establishes a visible connexion between the heart and the nose, or between the understanding and the chin; in all which respects, it has no doubt been very serviceable to those who have studied it. Great men, however, are not always wanted, and, if pretensions may be believed, we have more already than can be provided for agreeably to their wishes. Genius also is an article of so very little request in the commercial world, that some of the greatest and most rapid fortunes have been made with the smallest possible assistance from mental powers. And as to virtues, most of those which belong to trade are sufficiently provided for by penal statutes, written securities, and other similar restrictions. It would, therefore, be a very popular addition to the science we are applauding, if some of its penetrating disciples were to analyze foreheads, noses, eyes, and chins, merely with a view to

the reciprocal wants of debtor and creditor, and thereby reduce what is now called speculation to some degree of certainty.

We have indeed at present some men who affect to be Physiognomists behind the counter, who will not trust their neighbours because they do not like their countenances; and there are shopkeepers who will not give change for a bill, because they never saw their customer before. But had this science been extended as I propose, the mistakes of such pretenders would have been rectified, and the whole tribe of swindlers would have long ere now been annihilated. In all cases, traders would have been able to assign better reasons for not trusting goods, or lending money, than the hackneyed excuses, and half lies, of "not having the article," "being short of cash," or "their money tied up." Instead of such evasions, which are sometimes affronting, and sometimes unjust, to the party, they would have had it in their power to specify exactly in what feature they saw an intention to *move off*, and in what were visible marks of an impending *whereas*. —On this subject, I have only to add, that tradesmen in particular stand in need of a system of Physiognomy adapted to money-matters, because they have hitherto confined

their discernment to those most uncertain of all features, the coat, waistcoat, and breeches. The consequence has been, that bad men have got credit upon appearances, for which, probably in a double sense, they were indebted to their tailor; and honest men have been rejected merely because, in the erroneous phraseology of the shop, they "looked seedy."

I shall now conclude my lamentations for the decay of the Lavaterian system, by observing that, if it had been studied progressively, it might have been extended to other parts of the body than those specified by the great founder. In Lavater's time, and for some years afterwards, the face only was publicly exhibited, and therefore to that his discoveries were necessarily restricted. But I will appeal to a certain class of my readers, whether he might not, in failure of proper foreheads, noses, and chins, have built an equally certain and infallible system from NECKS, BOSOMS, and ELBOWS.

THE PROJECTOR. N° 90.

December 1808.

I HAVE already and more than once observed that the conclusion of a year is generally attended with some slight retrospect, and with some resolutions, however feeble, promising that the new year shall be the commencement of a new life of wisdom and virtue. How far such retrospects and such resolutions are serious and effectual, has generally been left to the determination of the individuals who enter upon them. We have had, however, of late, a species of Projectors, who start from their studies and their manufactories about this time, to lay down new plans by which wisdom shall be promoted in a degree hitherto unknown, and ignorance banished from Great Britain and her Islands, to take refuge in those dark regions over which Projectors have as yet thrown no rays of light.

Among these schemes, I perceive the offers of three or four Newspapers, which are to report the transactions of nations and of indivi-

duals, with a perspicuity and accuracy never yet attempted, or never brought to that perfection at which they are now arrived. If credit may be given to the assertions of this race of Projectors; *intelligence* is a thing from which the publick has hitherto been kept by a combination of Newspaper writers, whose business was to diffuse it. Such, they would make us believe, is the scarcity of information, that the people of Great Britain must soon have perished through lack of knowledge, if these gentlemen had not stept forth to bestow upon them, at least the elements of political history, if not a perfect and complete detail of what is passing in every quarter of the Globe. For this valuable and most important purpose, the Cabinets of Europe are enjoined to give up their papers, their councils, and their determinations. Generals and Admirals are commanded to exhibit their orders, their plans, and deliberations. Contending Sovereigns, whose object and interest it is to preserve a most sacred silence as to their designs upon one another, are ordered to communicate them to editors and paragraph-writers, with unreserved frankness, and a minuteness of detail equally honourable to the statesman and the gossip. And should those sources fail, or, what is more likely,

should they be insufficient to fill the columns of a daily paper, individuals are invited to exhibit the arcana of domestic history; the hopes and expectations of celibacy, and the intrigues and vexations of marriage; and if such invitations shall be slighted, they are threatened with a system of inspection from which no secrets shall be able to escape.

When these new vehicles of information are added to the number already established, it becomes a question whether the world be sufficient to supply materials adequate to so extensive a demand? News, indeed, may now be compared to food. Whatever we may eat to-day, however plentiful in quantity, or excellent in quality, we are equally ready on the morrow for a fresh banquet, and not very well pleased if the yesterday's provision be hashed up for our entertainment. We are not long out of bed before our first meal of intelligence is served up, and devoured with an eagerness proportioned to the long fast which sleep had occasioned. There is one respect, indeed, in which our food differs a little from our curiosity. Previous excesses will sometimes unfit a man for the solid enjoyment of the breakfast table; but few are known to rise so much disordered with the excesses of the evening, as to have no

appetite for the morning papers. On the contrary it has been found, that the more eagerly curiosity takes in its gratifications, the more ready it is for fresh supplies. There is not an hour in the day, a situation in business, or a posture in sickness or in health, which prevents a hungry Quidnunc from making a comfortable meal upon a wet Newspaper, or a gossiping News-monger; or enjoying the luxury of a messenger just arrived, especially if the contents of his dispatches are not known. And here, by the way, I may observe, that certainty in intelligence is one of the most unpalatable of all ingredients; while a wide scope for conjecture, and a due portion of ignorance, as to all the particulars of where, when, who, &c. form those luxurious dishes which we enjoy with unceasing relish —

> " As if increase of appetite had grown
> By what it fed on."

Some years ago, it was thought sufficient if this Newspaper-diet was accessible during six days of the week only; and the seventh, as in other employments, was reserved as a day of rest. But a numerous band of Projectors have discovered that this was a silly prejudice in favour of the laws of the country, and the anti-

quated customs of Religion. They have therefore determined to indulge the publick with a species of Sunday papers, or as they may be called (in order to carry on our comparison) Sunday *ordinaries*. Some attempts have been made to prevent these accommodations; but hitherto so much in vain, that their number has lately been nearly doubled; and they are resorted to with increasing *goût*. Yet they profess no higher entertainment than the remains and scraps of all the tables of the week, with now and then some kickshaws of their own; or, perhaps, what they esteem a very high relish, the account of a new Play; a thing of so much importance, that they suppose Sunday would be an intolerable and painful portion of our existence, if it were to be passed in ignorance of the Dramatis Personæ, the plot, and a specimen of the songs.

In these remarks on the analogy between Diet and News, nothing has been said of digestion, with which, indeed, the latter has little connexion. The powers of swallowing are expected to be great, but the after-process is a matter of very little importance. I shall, therefore, dismiss these, in order to notice another set of Projectors, who have appeared at this fertile season, and whose object seems to

be to extend the empire of Fashion. While the purveyors of News convey the events of wars, treaties, senates, and councils, these new adventurers aspire to the higher honour of circulating the varieties of dress. This, it may be said, is not absolutely a new attempt, but in its execution it is now proposed to extend it to a degree hitherto unknown. Former Projectors were content with exhibiting, in their Magazines of Fashion, engravings sometimes coloured and sometimes plain, of the newest dress; but the bold and enterprising gentlemen in my eye have contrived to convey samples of the very articles which are best calculated for extending the empire of Beauty, by slaying obdurate man.

Before I bestow the praises due to this attempt to unite Literature and Mantua-making, the Study and the Shop, I hope it will not be taken amiss if I offer a few remarks, either in the shape of objection, or of historical information, whichever the parties concerned choose to think them. To extend the empire of Fashion by dispersing her various laws through the most remote parts of the kingdom almost as soon as they are promulgated in the Metropolis, is an attempt which requires rather more consideration than has been bestowed upon it. It may

at first sight seem a very clever thing to exhibit a gown, or a cap, at Falmouth, or at Aberdeen, within a few hours after they are enacted in Bond-street, and to instruct the belles of those distant regions in the fashions of the month almost as soon as they have been communicated to the *elegantes* of St. James's or St. George's parishes. But while we are felicitating ourselves on so happy a thought, we ought at the same time to consider what is to become of this great, long, wide, and shapeless thing, increased and increasing, which we call the metropolis, the seat of fashion, the place where she keeps her court, her courtiers, her guards, and her palaces? Till now, we know, it has been her object to dispense her favours, and proclaim her laws to the rest of the kingdom at long and distant periods, and to dole them out in such proportions as may prevent a dangerous rivalship. The consequence of this was, that whatever faint gleams of fashion might appear in remote parts, no lady thought herself justified in the enjoyment of them, or even considered that she could appear in a dress fit to be seen, without one or two visits, at least, to the metropolis. But what will be the consequence if all for which Bond-street is valuable can be conveyed by post

in a small parcel; if not only the grand outline of the dress, but all its enchanting folds and openings, are exhibited on a figure so prepossessingly elegant that it may be doubted whether London itself can produce such living models? — exhibiting, too, not only the dress in all its killing elegance, but those very movements of the hand and arm, those assassinating motions of the head, that murderous peep of the shoe-peak, and destructive twirl of the fan, which have sent so many despairing lovers to their long homes? If such things can be carried in this manner over all the kingdom, at less expence than the coach-hire of a single lounge from the Strand to Piccadilly; if the only motive for visiting the metropolis shall thus be made to cease; if there remains no other inducement to leave the country, than because the town may happen to be more convenient for one's parents, or some other such matter-of-fact reason; we may have just ground for dreading a very serious falling-off in the revenues of London. What will become of the fashionable hotels, the genteel lodging-houses, and the gay promenades, when such perspective views are sent to the West of England as shall convince them, that things worth seeing are not always worth going to see! As to the

loss incurred, by the decrease of country visitors, to the opera, the theatres, the pastry-cooks, and the trinket-shops, I shall leave that to be estimated by the persons concerned. Certain it is, that very serious consequences may be expected to all classes in the Metropolis, when its attractions are thus spread over cities, towns, and villages, where Nature only has hitherto presided, and whose inhabitants have been known actually to live in want, and to die in ignorance of the elegancies of our Repositories, our Belles Assemblées, and our Mirrors of Fashion.

If, however, on the other hand, any means can be contrived to compensate to the Metropolis for this miserable state of desertion; if persons from the country can be prevailed upon to visit it for any other reason than to fill their trunks with finery at the first hand; or if any motive can be discovered more strong than a box at the Opera, a ticket for a Rout, or a promenade in the Park; if they can be prevailed upon to favour London from any other pride than to be able to say that they have been there, and have injured their health by untimely hours, and their reputation by improper associations; if all or any part of this compensation can be achieved; the new scheme of

making fashions travel with such rapidity as to become almost contemporaneous throughout the whole kingdom, ought not only to be encouraged, but may be extended yet farther. At present we have begun with samples of velvets and silks; from that the transition to caps and bonnets cannot be very difficult; and as articles of household furniture are now most particularly under the dominion of fashion, contrivances may be fallen upon by which persons living at a distance will be preserved from the danger of sitting on a chair that is unfashionable, or sleeping in a bed that has been perhaps a whole month out of vogue. Painting, we know, can represent just what we please; and whether we please to furnish our houses in the Greek, the Gothic, the French, or the Italian manner, I know no utensil of which an artist may not convey a very edifying notion. But I shall not dwell more particularly on this subject, as I am informed that such an extension of the moveables of fashion is actually in contemplation, and some eminent artists are now employed on the attitudes of a party at whist, — sketches of the genteelest modes of fainting — inside view of an Opera-box, with the newest loll over the front — perspective of the crossings in Bond-street, illustrated by

ancles of various sizes — and other customs and habits, which formerly could not be contemplated without the trouble, if it ever was a trouble, of a visit to the Metropolis.

It is plain from these circumstances that we live in a Projecting age; and as the business I have had the honour of carrying on is of a somewhat different sort, it would be very wrong in me to entertain any jealousy. The world is wide enough for us all; and I cannot perceive that there will be any dangerous interference between us. My readers have been long acquainted with the articles I deal in, and are in possession of my sample-book; in which, if they should perceive neither kerseymeres nor cambrics, they may occasionally hit upon an article which will suit their taste, without being quite so perishable as the Grecian mantle, or the Merino cap.

THE PROJECTOR. No 91.

"Sordidus et dives, populi contemnere voces
Sic solitus." HOR.

January 1809.

QUACKERY, which for many years has been confined to medical pretenders, seems now to be practised by pretenders of every other description. Whether this be owing to the success which has attended the cure of diseases by Quacks, or that their mode of address is the best calculated to set off the merits of any kind of pretender, I shall not inquire: but whoever reads the newspapers must be convinced that the venders of pills and drops have of late been robbed of their eloquent addresses, their fine imagery, and their flowers of rhetorick, by a numerous tribe of quack-dealers who profess to dispose of articles of a very different kind. But as, in imitating the antient fraternity of medical practitioners, these new pretenders seem a little deficient in that quality which, of all others, enables them to make an impression on the public mind; I have ventured, in this

paper, with my usual regard for aspiring merit, to offer a few remarks on the subject, tending, I hope, to their lasting advantage. Indeed, I may safely adopt one of their favourite boasts, and assert that all I propose is *pro bono publico.*

Quackery is of very antient standing; but has certainly suffered no little degradation by being confined to a set of men who profess nothing higher than to cure the disorders of the vulgar, and who insult the delicacy of our senses by bringing the language of the bed-room into our fashionable newspapers. Why this should so long have been the case, is somewhat unaccountable. There is in quackery a principle of action, and a promise of success, which evidently point out to men of a certain degree of discernment that it was intended by nature for a much wider range of operation; and that men of all descriptions, who determine to succeed in the world by qualities in which they are grossly deficient, may have recourse to it as a never-failing recommendation.

There are, however, many matters to be taken into consideration, before a man can set up his stage, and become a successful rival to the manufacturers of pills and boluses. And among those, for I do not mean to enumerate

them all, there is this indispensable conclusion to be drawn, namely, that the bulk of mankind are fools, and that in parting with their money, they have a natural inclination to prefer rogues to honest men, and blockheads to men of learning. From what premises this conclusion is drawn, whether from information or inspection, whether it be acquired by intuition or by actual enumeration, are questions of little importance, provided it be laid down and adhered to as an infallible maxim. But as the bulk of mankind are not the whole, what remain are to be accounted either so inattentive as to be harmless, or so slenderly provided with understanding as to be worked upon by frequent operations, and finally included in the great mass.

It may be said, for I wish to obviate objections as I proceed, that a man may find himself mistaken in this calculation. But this objection is not stronger than may be made to any other scheme. Some will fail, and some succeed; and it is observed that even of those who fail, and who, as the language of your rigid moralists express it, become detected and exposed, there is not one of them who departs from his first way of thinking. He still persists in supposing mankind to be fools; but has now discovered that Fortune, for some

reason or other, has determined that a more favourite adventurer shall have the honour to prove them to be so.

Having, therefore, adopted this maxim, the candidate for quackish prosperity has only to make one exception, by supposing himself possessed of all that collective wisdom which would have been otherwise parcelled out among his fellow-creatures. He is to take it for granted that no person can see, hear, comprehend, or understand, in any other way than he would have him. Above all things he must never entertain the smallest suspicion that it is possible for any human being to detect his tricks, nor for any considerable number of human beings to become tired of his repeated attempts to prove himself the only wise man in the world, and the only man that enjoys the use of his eyes, while all the others remain with no other degree of sight or feeling, than enables them to put their hands into their pockets, and pay him for the trouble he takes, or the expence he is at, in imposing upon them.

But it must be owned that this last is a conclusion not so easily to be drawn, as what we first proposed. It is not difficult to suppose all mankind to be fools, nor to say, with an eminent genius of the medical class, "Give me all

the fools, and you shall have the wise men:" but, to fancy one's-self in a condition to impose upon all the world, and possessed of that high degree of superiority which is necessary, is a much more difficult attempt. Many have failed in it for want of knowing how to put on this elevation of mind; others have miscarried from harbouring in their minds a quantity of modesty, an article probably picked up in youth, like other prejudices of education, and kept up, one hardly knows how or why. That it must be got rid of, however, is so indispensably necessary, that if I thought one of the persons for whom this paper is intended were to bargain for the retention of any portion of it, I should think it mere waste of time to proceed farther in my lucubration.

There is but one way in which modesty can in any degree be tolerated; and that is, by uniting it with an equal, or, what is preferable, a much greater degree of assurance, forming that well-known and useful composition called modest-assurance. And although modesty in any shape is a superfluous and unfair ingredient, yet as it helps to compose a word which is less offensive to the common ear than what ought to be used, I am willing it should still be retained by those half-formed characters

who seem disposed to set limits to their undertakings.

In other cases, and particularly in those bright examples of modern quackery which have appeared before the publick of late, we can have less hesitation in pronouncing that any share of modesty, diffidence, or moderation, any sense of shame, or suspicion of detection, any remorse when detected, or any penitence when exposed, are quite out of character. If such things were to be admitted, and especially if they were to become common, it would be impossible for self-interest to assume so many elegant forms as we frequently behold, such as knowledge, loyalty, patriotism, &c. instead of ignorance, democracy, and contempt for the people. These are degrees of quackery, which could never be practised with success, if he who determined to practise them should be so unfortunate as to admit the opinion that there was any thing improper or unbecoming in impudence. It is very evident that scarce any person who knows the value of impudence has ever been known to fail: but if it should so happen that a man has just enough of that quality to exhibit as a sample, and not enough to serve for a stock, I would tell him that he is not qualified for the great darings of

political, or any other kind of grand quackery, and I would advise him to return to the obscurity in which nature seems to have intended he should remain for ever.

As impudence, therefore, is the principle of all that species of quackery, which seems to be now substituted for the virtues of the pill-box, and the light of "the lamp in the passage," it may be necessary to take notice of a particular ingredient, without which it will not produce its due effect. And it is the more necessary to take notice of this, because a want of perseverance in it may lead to unpleasant consequences. The ingredient to which I thus allude, if it be expressed in negative terms, is a perfect indifference concerning veracity, an article about which, it is said, "the world makes a wonderful fuss." Now, however easy it may be to practise this indifference about veracity, I have known some very distinguished characters who have made strange blunders, and have, in particular, supposed, that it implied that they should *never* tell truth. No mistake can be more fatal than this, nor indeed, if we consider it aright, more ridiculous. As the grand motive of all quackery is self-interest, I allow that nothing should be admitted which can interfere with it. On the

other hand, every thing ought to be practised which can administer to so important an end; but if it should happen that a little truth would have this tendency, why may it not be told? It comes awkwardly, to be sure; and the person using it seems as if he laboured under a defect of speech; yet still, where his interest is concerned, it would be very unwise to be deficient even in this, which otherwise would be a most dangerous quality.

Some have recommended, in preference to a continued series of falsehoods, such a mixture of truth, as may serve to perplex and confound, where it does not convince; and there certainly are cases where such a mixture may be very proper. But it requires so much judgment in preparing, so much of that kind of judgment in which the party is generally most deficient, and it may leave so many openings for detection, that it ought not to be attempted unless on some very important occasions, such as, a Quack addressing his constituents, or writing his life, or some other prolix exhibition of that kind. And even there I have known it to fail, and to be followed by consequences as unpleasing to men of ambition, as a verdict, or a pillory.

There are many other ingredients which may

prove of considerable service in modern quackery; but the above, if managed with discretion, will in general be sufficient to create that artificial reputation which promotes a man's interest. It could be wished, indeed, that they were less seldom brought into play, for the sake of those who may appear hereafter actuated by the same worthy designs. There are two obvious dangers arising from the practice of impudence, in order to promote self-interest: First, that the market may be overstocked; and secondly, that the article will degenerate by falling into low hands. The first of these dangers, I think, may be already apprehended; the various processes of this species of quackery having been so often practised that the publick, formerly all fools, are beginning to suspect the trick, and to be shy and peery. And as to the article falling into low hands, I know not whether, if we can trust the evidence of the newspapers, it can well fall into lower. When we find men not only aspiring, but actually arriving at official stations, merely that they may operate as a puff on their mechanical employments, and add a certain dignity to the occupations of the gamester and the quack, there is some reason to apprehend that the publick at large may acquire sense

enough to see farther through such impositions than was intended, and spirit enough to resent them.

I would therefore recommend to those geniuses for whom this paper is intended, to consider that there is no business which may not be overstocked; and that the arts by which self-interest is promoted, may be made too cheap. Valuable as impudence is, and surely many gentlemen of figure may cordially subscribe to the services it has rendered them, it is liable to be misunderstood, and to be injured in the handling. It is a much more intricate process to persevere in, than those who practise it seem to be aware. It has its weaknesses; it is liable to sudden disorders, and frequently to be so deranged as to be attended with all the mischiefs of modesty. I was lately told that a gentleman who has the reputation of having been a very skilful practitioner of this article for many years, was lately heard to say, that if he had the world to begin again, he would adopt a course diametrically opposite. Now, there must be something very wrong in the operation, when such is the result.

It is to be remarked also, as the principal cause of the failure of impudence, where it does really fail in producing its object, that it was

not accompanied with a sufficient quantity of talent. I note this as a warning; and I should ill close this paper of advice to the parties concerned, if I neglected to add, that of all the monstrous coalitions the world has ever seen, that of impudence and ignorance is the most monstrous. It has done more mischief to impudence than all the writings of all the moralists from Solomon to the present day. If continued, it must be the ruin of ambitious quackery; for it tends to make those wise who have been accounted fools, and it deprives us of an admirable apology for imposture and infamy, it being a very common opinion that the greatest rogue upon earth deserves respect, if it can be proved that he has prostituted the finest talents, and perverted the greatest gifts ever given to man.

THE PROJECTOR. N° 92.

" Mortals, whose pleasures are their only care,
First wish to be impos'd on, and then are;
And, lest the fulsome artifice should fail,
Themselves will hide its coarseness with a veil."

COWPER.

February 1809.

" MR. PROJECTOR,

" I HOPE I do not very much deviate from the purpose of your Paper in requesting that you will now and then bestow a little attention on *words* as well as things, and give us some rules for speaking as well as thinking on certain subjects. My reason for making this request is, that, in my humble opinion, we are too much influenced by words, and that, in many cases, we can produce no better arguments in favour of our actions, than the repetition of certain words, to which we can with great difficulty affix any meaning, and which seem to have lost their original and obvious meaning, without being able to find another.

"Among these I might fairly instance the word *honour*, which has at least as many meanings as letters, and which, with all these meanings, has departed so widely from its original sense, that it is as often used with a bad as with a good intent, and is consequently as often productive of mischief as of good. It must, for example, have undergone some strange changes in its progress through the world, when it inclines a man to be exceedingly punctual in satisfying a sharper, while he is equally pertinacious in ruining a tradesman; and when a man's honour makes him very nice as to his own feelings with his sex, while he can without the least compunction insult the feelings and destroy the reputation of a helpless female.

"If, amidst this confusion of ideas, we pause a little to inquire what honour was, and what it is; to whom shall we apply? But my immediate purpose is not so much to direct your attention to this unfortunate word, which has often been handled by your predecessors, as to hint that if, instead of *honour*, we were to substitute *shame*, we should approach a little nearer to that imaginary something which creates coxcombs and quarrels. Yet, even with these helps, we shall perhaps be obliged at last

to confess that we have only exchanged one series of inconsistencies for another. If we allow that a nice sense of shame is one of the criteria of a manly spirit, how shall we reconcile this with the well-known fact, that no men take more pains to expose themselves to ridicule than some of those very gentlemen who affect to dread nothing so much? If this were not the case, how comes it that one of the most distinguishing features of their character is, to become the dupes of sharpers and strumpets; sharpers without a grain of understanding to recommend their company, and strumpets without the least disguise to conceal their avarice and prodigality? Those who are so exceedingly afraid of ridicule, one might suppose, would of all other men be the most careful of doing any thing to incur it; but, in proportion to the high tone of their pretensions to sense, honour, or whatever else they please to call it, is their propensity to become the easy dupes of the most inartful impostors.

"But, Mr. PROJECTOR, my immediate purpose was, to suggest to your consideration the confusion lately introduced in our use, or rather abuse, of the words *famous*, *celebrated*, and *eminent*, and *notorious*, which we seem to consider as synonymous, and apply indiscri-

minately to all persons who become, by whatever means, the subject of public conversation or writing. One consequence of this is, that our *eminent men* are sometimes such as occur in the Biographia Britannica, sometimes such as are only to be found in the Newgate Calendar; and sometimes an intermediate set, who have not merit sufficient to deserve the honourable notice of the distinguishing Biographer, nor crime enough to be recorded by the Reverend Ordinary. Besides the frequent occurrence of Mr. BAGSHOT, a *famous* highwayman, and of Mr. TRICKUM, a celebrated sharper, if we look back to our newspaper obituaries for a long series of years, we shall find hundreds of worthy citizens who died *eminent* tailors, *eminent* shoemakers, and *eminent* bricklayers.

"Now, Sir, I have so much respect for an honest tradesman who has acquired riches by the fair progress of his labours, and who has educated and raised his family to a degree of consideration to which his ancestors were not entitled, that I should be very averse to deprive his monument of this honourable epithet, or his survivors of the harmless vanity of reading in a newspaper how *eminent* their relation died, if it were not for one little circumstance that

seems to have escaped their attention, but which will readily occur to men like you, Mr. PROJECTOR. The circumstance to which I allude is neither more nor less than the poverty of our language. At a time, Sir, when it is universally allowed that we want words to express the characters of the English Worthies who have been distinguished for wisdom, bravery, and virtue, we certainly ought to be a little more œconomical in the use of the few words we have. What is the consequence of our misapplied prodigality, but that, when we have a really eminent character to celebrate, we either must do it in words already bestowed on the most insignificant of mankind, and sometimes on the most worthless; or we must have recourse to a sort of inflated style, ending in bombast and nonsense, which degrades the virtue to which it is applied, and destroys that simplicity which ought to prevail in monumental or historical panegyric.

"It may, at first sight, appear a flattering circumstance, and produce no little envy among our rivals on the Continent, that Great Britain abounds so much in fame, eminence, and celebrity, as to be enabled to bestow these articles in the most wanton profusion upon her inhabitants. But, on the other hand, a little

reflection must convince us that this plenty is more apparent than real; and that, by an indiscriminate distribution of the articles, we have injured their value, or altered their nature. In some languages a different meaning is affixed to the same words by means of accents or points; and it were to be wished that ours had some marks by which a famous general might be distinguished from a famous highwayman, or a famous prelate from a famous pickpocket. For want of such distinctive marks, our funeral celebrations and eminent praises follow with as much state the body of the famous deceased, when it is to be conveyed to Westminster Abbey, as when it is carted to Surgeons' Hall; and our historical annals speak with equal rapture of the famous battle on the heights of Corunna, and the famous boxing-match on Epsom Downs. A Moore and a Baird may be the champions of England; but it is a sad thing that they must share that honour with a Crib or a Belcher; and that no more elevated language can be conferred on those who gratified the hopes of the Nation, than upon those who have fulfilled the wishes of the pickpockets; upon those who beat their enemies, than upon those who rob their friends.

"But, Sir, while I regret this misapplication of words that ought to be consecrated to what is truly heroic, great, and virtuous, it is some consolation that a new word has lately made its appearance, which promises, if properly applied, to restore matters to their pristine regularity and consistency. Ashamed of being thought to court fame, celebrity, or eminence, because perhaps conscious that the use of such words may be applied for the purposes of ridicule, we have some characters who aspire to what they call, and, for once, call very properly, *notoriety*. I know not where they found this word, which has not been in common use for many years; but certainly nothing more appropriated to them and the objects of their ambition can well be employed. The ladies and gentlemen, however, who are desirous of obtaining *notoriety*, whether by an exposure of their gallantries, their prodigality, their entertainments, their horses, carriages, debts, or other means leading to the same happy end, must excuse us, if we insist that, while they pride themselves in the substantive, they will also condescend to permit a free use of the adjective. We shall then distinctly know what is meant by a *notorious* character, instead of perplexing ourselves, and

confounding good and bad, by a promiscuous use of *famous*, *eminent*, or *celebrated*. Our great Lexicographer affords a definition very happily applicable: *Notorious*, he says, means 'publicly known; evident to the world; apparent; not hidden. It is commonly used of things known to their disadvantage.' They who seek *notoriety* in the world of chance and pleasure, must be sensible that this definition affords a very correct notion of their peculiar ambition, and of the means they practise to gratify it, while it cautiously excludes any improper use of words that ought to be reserved for more rational pursuits. Those ladies and gentlemen, therefore, who have lately flattered themselves that by their intrigues and their assignations, their constant application to hazard, their contempt of the laws of their country, and of all domestic comforts and virtues, they have become *famous*, must now be told that they are only *notorious*. And, although such pursuits are most eagerly followed by certain ladies, who, having no character left, and no more of their sex than the outward appearance, flatter themselves that they will be recorded as the *famous* Lady ——, or the *celebrated* Mrs. ——; I hope, as they have no delicacy in the use of the means, they will not

object to having attained that great end, the reputation of becoming publicly *notorious*. One fair-one, at least, who has lately astonished a crowded assembly by the shyness of her humility and diffidence, as much as by her wonderful adherence to veracity, will surely not refuse to exchange the vulgar word *famous*, which she has so long shared with persons of her own description, for that of *notorious*. And, although she must lament that our language does not admit of comparison, like the Latin, in which case her honour would have been *superlative*, yet it must be some consolation to her, as well as to the publick, that a word may be found, which recalls every idea suitable to the 'birth, parentage, and education, life, character, and behaviour,' of a woman of genuine *notoriety*. I am, Sir,

"Yours, &c.

"A. Constant Reader."

My Correspondent's objections to the abuse of words are not perhaps new; but they are not upon that account the less worthy of our attention, because the representations which have been made on this subject do not appear as yet to have answered their purpose. While we congratulate ourselves on the refined polish

given to our language by the growing taste of our age, it may be worth while to consider whether we are not in some danger of refining our language to a dangerous excess, and of entirely banishing the use of what was formerly called *plain English.* My Correspondent has instanced some cases in which this specious refinement prevails; and perhaps would not have greatly erred, if he had attributed it partly to a degree of politeness improperly employed on unworthy objects, and partly to a sort of fellow-feeling with crimes and follies in which we may be concerned. It is certain that some crimes, by which the peace of society is eminently endangered, are usually expressed in very gentle and delicate terms. And these terms convey so little of dislike proportioned to their atrocity, that we might in time be at a loss to know what proper name belongs to such crimes, if we did not find it sometimes expressed pretty freely in our Courts of Justice, or did not hear it repeated every Sunday from that very antient and perspicuous body of laws, called the Ten Commandments. Owing to this very polite language, one who does not know the world, and seldom speaks its language, is surprised to hear how many instances of theft are *harmless tricks*, or *ne-*

cessary accommodations; how frequently adultery is only a *faux pas*, and murder an *affair of honour*. Still politeness is an accomplishment of a nature so captivating, that perhaps it will not be easy to restore words to their proper meaning, or to give every thing its right name, unless we can prevail upon those who are afraid to express a crime to become equally afraid to commit it. It is to little purpose that we grow nice in words, in proportion as we become gross in facts; and it is certain that whatever softenings and refinements we may bestow on Vice and Folly on purpose to hide them from ourselves, or to recommend them to others, they are very apt to regain their right names when it is too late either for shame or penitence.

THE PROJECTOR. Nº 93.

"London ingulphs them all! The shark is there,
And the shark's prey: the spendthrift, and the leech
That sucks him." COWPER.

March 1809.

THERE are few studies that afford more rational amusement or instruction than that of Natural History. The classifications, characteristicks, and descriptions of animals, vegetables, and minerals, afford an inexhaustible gratification to curiosity; and, from the beauty and excellence of the graphic illustrations, present one of the most elegant entertainments to the eye. But, while I bestow this praise on the writings of our eminent Natural Historians; and add, that of late years they have been published, in great numbers, with an accuracy and splendour worthy of the first talents; I must take the liberty to suggest some small objections, to which, in my humble opinion, they are yet liable. The first is, that more attention seems to be paid to the mineral and vege-

table kingdoms than to the animal; and the second is, that in the animal kingdom, more attention is paid to the classes of those we call beasts, than to that of men, while it can never be denied that the latter is of far more importance.

The consequence of all this would be trifling, if it amounted only to prove a defect in a book, or an oversight in an author; but I am afraid it is owing to this that so much more value is often set upon a horse than a man; that a colt is better educated than an heir; and that more care is taken to keep a pack of yelping dogs in good case, than to provide for the comforts of an equal number of honest tenants. In truth, we seem to be far better acquainted with the properties of such animals than we are with our own species; and hence many of us look for those valuable services, and that fidelity and friendship, in four-legged animals, which we cannot find among the upright bipeds. Another evil consequence is, that while we study all the arts of destroying noxious animals, and bestow large sums on vermin-killers and rat-catchers, and on the enemies of grubs and caterpillars, we allow the most pernicious vermin of our own species to range at large, and destroy every thing that is valuable about us.

On these accounts, I have long been employed in preparing an additional volume or volumes to our systems of Zoology, with a view to describe some, if not the whole, of the species of human and semi-human beings of the noxious kind, which have hitherto been omitted. Every student must be aware of the utility of such a performance, provided it be well executed, as he is liable very often to hear of animals of the kind alluded to, which he cannot find properly described in any of the existing systems.

Why my work has not been brought forward ere now, is, perhaps, a question of very trivial importance, except as it affords me an opportunity to advert to the growing expence of Projects of this kind. And this, indeed, has placed me between two difficulties; either to wait the return of cheap times, which may never come, or to try the fate of a subscription, which may never fill. Of the two, however, my inclination leans towards the subscription; and in order to promote it by the fairest means in my power, I have determined to lay before the publick a specimen of my work, taken from one of the most striking parts of it; namely, that in which I treat of the JEZEBEL. This animal, although not absolutely a non-descript,

has not yet been so fully described as a creature of such extraordinary properties and such a mischievous disposition seems to demand.

Zoology requires history as well as description. But with respect to the history of the JEZEBEL, little more need be said, than that it is mentioned in some very antient writings, and that its properties seem to have undergone very little change since it was first discovered. In different countries they are known by different names, as, *Demireps*, *Brims*, *Sharps*, and of late, by way of periphrasis, "Ladies under *Protection*." The absurdity of this last appellation has, however, induced me to reject it; first, because, with somewhat of the appearance of that beautiful and interesting animal the *Lady*, they have none of the sex; and secondly, because the word *Protection* would be far better applied to the unhappy creatures whom they lay hold of.

The JEZEBELS are not perhaps peculiar to any country; but in ours the breed has of late increased in a very alarming degree, notwithstanding the means that have been adopted to thin their numbers. About the cause of this increase authors are not agreed. Some think that it is owing to the Continent being closed against us, to which we used to send some of

these creatures. Others are of opinion, that they are smuggled into this country from the Continent, and never get back again. Be this as it may, it is a singular property in them, that they are seldom found in what we call the Country, but mostly infest the Metropolis, where they are maintained by those who take a fancy to them in a most expensive manner. It is a yet more singular property, that whatever expence is bestowed on the keep of them, they are remarked to be never satisfied; being in truth of all creatures of their kind the most voracious, and, at the same time, the most wasteful.

So many extraordinary stories are told of the voraciousness of these creatures, that a volume, and perhaps not an uninteresting one, might be compiled on this subject only. Nothing can be conceived more expensive than their diet, which must be renewed perpetually, to keep them in any kind of humour; and this is the more remarkable, because, in their original or tame state, before they left their parents, the greater part of them have been known to be content with any refuse. As soon as they grow wild, their greediness begins to appear, and devours every thing that comes in its way. Solomon, who wrote expressly upon this subject,

compares them to "a deep ditch;" a simile which probably pleased his Eastern readers, and is still adopted by Naturalists in this country, who, in describing them, make frequent use of the word *deep*, in opposition to *shallow*, which is one of the prime characteristicks of those who take a fancy to these creatures.

In their wildest state, and as their voraciousness increases, their appetites become very unnatural, or, to say the least, very whimsical. Some have a particular *penchant* for carriages and horses, which they will often devour in a few weeks; household furniture of the most costly kind is another of their favourite dishes, and they devour them so clean, that although thousands have been expended for them, not an article is to be found perhaps within a week or two after they have laid their claws upon them. Others, who in their original state have been known to content themselves with chalk and cinders, have devoured whole estates, houses, land, and trees. Forests of oak have been sometimes felled to please them; and such quantities of substances, as hard as gold and silver, have been devoured by them, as exceeds all belief, if the circumstances were not verified by the evidence of their keepers.

It may be thought, that an animal of such

mischievous properties must have long ago been classed with those wild creatures which, it is said by historians, our ancestors exterminated from this kingdom; but the truth is, that either those historians deceive us in this matter, or we have lost the happy arts by which our ancestors conferred so great a benefit on their country. At present, it is certain that they are to be found in great numbers in their wildest state, and live in general unmolested. Their Keepers, to whom they are indebted for their preservation, are themselves a species of animals whom I mean to describe more particularly in my great work; and shall therefore only say of them, in this place, that they are known by sundry names. Some think they belong to the genus *Flats;* others class them with the *Dupes.* They do not, like the JEZEBELS, lose their sex; but, in point of brain, there seems a vast defect; and perhaps in point of constitution they are inferior, as they are observed to live but a very short time, dying sometimes in one place of confinement, and sometimes in another. Their understanding likewise is so deficient, that they are incapable of comprehending the plainest propositions submitted to them, provided their Jezebels be the subject. They are not only incapable of

following a train of argument on this head; but it is even found extremely difficult to make them comprehend the meaning of these simple words, *Danger*, *Risk*, *Ruin*, *Destruction*, *Contempt*, *Poverty*, *Soul*, *Body*, &c.; although the thing signified by such words be so very obvious to every one else, that it seems to be a miracle that they should miss it. But the cause of this I purpose very clearly to prove in my intended publication, and now return to the History of the JEZEBEL.

It has been remarked as a wise provision of Nature, that noxious animals are seldom long-lived. Whether this be owing to any peculiarity in their constitution, or that their voracious disposition inclines them to devour substances that destroy them, or that, the world being generally in league against them, they are allowed, when caught, to perish by neglect or confinement, are questions which may, perhaps, come to be discussed in my intended work. It may be sufficient to notice, that as they arrive at perfection sooner than any other animals, so their decay is likewise more rapid, and instances of premature old age are frequent among them. It is also peculiar to them, that when they perceive themselves on the decline, they court the closest confinement, and wish,

if one may judge from appearances, to be forgotten. It is no less peculiar to them, that when one happens to fall into this state, she is immediately shunned by the whole of her species, as well as by those who formerly took pleasure in keeping and feeding her in the most luxurious manner. It is said, indeed, by some who have been present on such occasions, that nothing can be more shocking than one of these creatures when dying, either in private or publick; for many of them have departed this life in so public a manner as to be gazed at by thousands, but without any of those feelings of sympathy which accompany death in other cases.

The appearances on dissection are rather singular. The principal difference between them and other animals is, that they have no heart. What appears to have been intended for the seat of the tender affections, and mild and gentle feelings, is completely worn away; but in the room of it, a quantity of a fiery substance is often found, or a subtle fluid, which so perpetually changes its properties, that no analysis has yet been sufficient to resolve it into any thing steady or useful. There is some appearance of brain, but so twisted, contorted, and shaped into so many crooked and unaccount-

able forms, that a Materialist would be apt to think such a brain could be the parent only of low cunning, deceit, and treachery. From frequent dissections, indeed, some Anatomists have been of opinion, that the JEZEBEL partakes very much of the nature of the shark and of the crocodile. It is certain that the tears which they are frequently observed to shed, and which they shed with the utmost facility, are entirely of the crocodile kind. Their tears, likewise, it ought to have been before mentioned, are of a very peculiar sort, having no connexion whatever with real pain, distress, sorrow, or any of the causes which produce weeping in the human species; but they flow most plentifully at the sight of a new chariot, a sideboard of plate, a set of china, or any other of those singular substances which this creature is known to devour with the utmost greediness.

From this brief description of the JEZEBEL, my Readers may conceive some opinion of the animal, and may be enabled to form some judgment of the expediency of lessening the breed of a creature so unnatural and noxious. Indeed, if in these times we only consider the quantity of necessaries and luxuries such a creature consumes in the most wasteful manner, it

is argument enough to induce us to take into consideration the means of lessening their numbers. When, however, in addition to this, we find that they answer no one good purpose in the creation, and that the mischief they occasion to families and individuals is greater than can often be calculated, it becomes no longer a question, but an imperious duty, to describe them in such a manner as to alarm the persons who have hitherto been apt to gratify their taste by keeping one or two of these noxious creatures. Whether the present attempt can produce that effect, may be doubtful; but the purpose would be effectually answered, if they who have had more frequent opportunities of studying the properties of the animal were to contribute their observations and experience; and, if a junction was formed between the remarks of two classes of persons who seldom meet, the *Moralists* and the *Jailors*. If we examined not only the establishment but the prison, and drew comparisons between the equipage of the banquet and the discipline of the bridewell, we might be enabled to form such correct notions on the subject as might unveil the native deformity of the JEZEBEL, and send her to feed in the streets and highways,

among the less vicious of her species, who have no *protection* either from the silent approaches of penitence, or the unavoidable progress of disease and misery.

THE PROJECTOR. N° 94.

"To vice *industrious;* but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful." MILTON.

April 1809.

THERE are few vices more generally censured by Moralists than Idleness. It is represented as not only the greatest of evils, but the occasion of all evil; and so many shocking pictures and characters are drawn of idle men and women, that we are inclined to question whether they have been taken from originals. But, with due submission to my predecessors, who have presented Idleness to their readers, either as an example or a warning, I have some doubt whether the subject has ever been handled with philosophical precision, and whether they have begun where they ought;

first, by establishing the existence of Idleness, and then proceeding to a correct definition. For my own part, after very long and mature consideration of the subject, and after a very attentive observation of mankind, particularly in those ranks of life where it is thought to be principally inherent, I am inclined to be of opinion, that Moralists have entirely mistaken the matter. So far from Idleness being a prevailing vice, there is some reason to doubt its very existence. It seems to me, on the contrary, very clear that it would be easy to prove the existence of an universal dislike and abhorrence of all that is called Idleness, among the very people who are supposed to indulge it in the highest degree.

Mankind are usually divided into two classes: those who are active, and those who are idle; or, in other words, those who do something, and those who do nothing. The former class I am very willing to admit as the most numerous; but of the latter we want more proofs than have yet been exhibited. In order, however, to render this division of mankind visible, we are told that the active are to be seen among the middling and lower classes; and the idle among the upper, the rich, the gay, or the fashionable world. It is with a view to rescue

the latter from the imputation, that I have put together the present thoughts; and have therefore prefaced them by a doubt, whether there be such a thing as Idleness.

As all are agreed that it is not to be found among the middling or lower classes, I may consider that point as fully established; and have only to prove that nothing of the kind is to be discovered in the other grand division of mankind, namely, the rich and the fashionable. And this task, I apprehend, will not be very difficult, if I can prevail upon my readers to agree upon some few preliminary points, and can remove some little misunderstandings, that seem to prevail upon the subject.

Many men are apt to consider their neighbours as idle, merely because they happen not to be employed exactly as they are themselves; and it is probably owing to such prejudices, that the list of Idlers becomes nominally increased. But as every man is possessed of a portion of time which he is anxious to employ, and as all time employed is employed by those who are doing something, it follows, that a state of perfect inactivity must be very rare. And, although mechanicks are apt to think that they are more industrious than the customers for whom they work, a little observa-

tion might be sufficient to convince them, that their estimate of Idleness and Industry is formed upon wrong principles. Nothing, for example, can be worse founded than the supposition, that the man who has constructed a dining-table is a more pains-taking man than the owner who gives a dinner on it; or that he who makes a pair of shoes in a day, is *ipso facto* a less idle man than him who walks many days upon them, in quest of employment to consume his time. And I question whether the lamp-lighter, the glass-grinder, the hothouse gardener, and the floor-chalker, who prepare a mansion for the reception of a party of five hundred friends, are not more idly employed than the lady of quality who gives the rout, and who has not a moment's leisure or peace in preparing to entertain such a mass of friendship, in doing which she is to rival or outshine her neighbours.

It is usual to say, that a life of Idleness is the most miserable of all lives; and it would be true, if it could be found. But such a life is not more incompatible in the case of the middling and lower classes, than in the case of the rich and fashionable. There is no other difference in their cares and anxieties, than that the one is desirous to be paid in money,

and the other in *eclat*, a sort of paper currency, of which many fine specimens are daily issued. Indeed, if we were to carry the comparison farther, we should probably find, that of the articles of care and industry, the rich have by much the largest share. The labour of those who are usually called industrious, is a simple operation, conducted upon the common principles of mechanicks, and guided by a pattern that can be easily followed. The employments of the rich, on the contrary, are such as force them to ransack earth, sea, and air, and all the stores of fancy, to produce a something, not only unlike any pattern, but incompatible with any known law of taste, feeling, or common sense.

Still, if it be urged that a life of Idleness is a life of misery, we would ask, who are they that enjoy such a life? If the absence of employment be Idleness, the mechanick has more of it to answer for than the opulent. The mechanick works by stated hours, and he has stated hours in which he does nothing. The gay and fashionable have no such allotments of time; from the moment they get up until they go again to bed, a space frequently much longer than a mechanick's day, they are incessantly in quest, or in possession, of something

to consume time; and, if they are not doing something, they are asking for something to do. Their employments, therefore, are very various, and so frequently changed, as to give a zest to them which the mechanick cannot understand or relish. Their range of business, too, is far greater. They are as anxiously busy, whether they sit still, or go abroad. They fly from one task to another on horses, or in chariots; they travel hundreds of miles in pursuit of employment; and seem never so happy, and never so industrious, as when they are going *from* something *to* something. The newspapers, whose virtuous attention to this class of men of business is a striking characteristic of an enlightened age, are particularly careful to note the progress of their industry. They inform us, when they were employed in the auction-room, when at the splendid gala, when in coming to town, when in going to the country, when engaged at dinner, and when in their Sunday devotions in Hyde Park, when examining the condition of their estates at Newmarket, and when toiling for fame and money behind four blood-horses in a barouche.

Examples like these would surely be sufficient to exculpate the fashionable world from

the charge of Idleness, if the prejudices already alluded to did not prevail too generally, and if the middling and lower classes did not arrogate to themselves the whole of industry, merely because they have no relish, or no opportunity, for any employments but their own. In this narrow spirit, they form themselves into companies, and they meet in halls, which they call the Goldsmiths' Hall, the Haberdashers' Hall, the Fishmongers' Hall, &c. where the affairs of what they exclusively call industry are regularly transacted. But have we not lately seen a number of gentlemen, who were formerly content to be industrious separately, erect themselves into a company, called the Whip Club, practising the art and mystery of driving horses; and holding regular meetings, in which matters pertaining to the stable are discussed with knowledge and precision, and subjects of every other kind most carefully excluded? I am not certain whether these gentlemen have obtained a Charter of Incorporation; but they are provided with a numerous *livery*, and are, in all respects, qualified to produce, by personal example, an excellent generation of coachmen and postillions. Yet, we shall probably be told that they are idle, merely because they have chosen one

trade instead of another, and are more desirous to be masters of the whip and bridle, the reins and the girth, than to learn how to improve estates, bring up families, or fulfil the expectations of their ancestors.

There is another employment which may be brought as a proof that the rich are not to be ranked among the idle; and which so peculiarly belongs to them, that men of no other description can have it in their power. Those who suppose that the possessors of wealth are upon that account idle, might with greater truth reverse the proposition; since we find many instances in which it demands their utmost industry to get rid of that wealth in such a manner as to shew that they once had it. And here lies an essential difference between them and the mechanicks who deny them the praise of industry. The latter never have more wealth than they know what to do with; to part with it, therefore, requires scarcely an effort; for, in truth, it is frequently called for before they can be said to have accumulated it. On the other hand, the fashionable-opulent require all the thought and industry they can muster, to get rid of their possessions in a genteel and becoming manner; and, from the nature of their purchases and their sales, they

frequently leave us at a loss to admire sufficiently the singularity and ingenuity of their expedients to free themselves from what has been termed "the root of all evil." And so far are they from being idle in this pursuit, that they are, perhaps, never more actively employed than when their jealous rivals, the mechanicks, the counter-men, and the counting-house-men, are not only *not* employed at their labours, but are actually fast asleep.

An objection, however, must here be obviated: It may be said, that although the opulent do discover a very great share of active industry in disposing of their superfluities; insomuch that they even part with their necessaries; their industry must end when they have come to an end of their wealth, and when, in the sympathetic and sentimental phrase, they are "done up." There must surely be an end to work when the tools are no longer to be had; and that indefatigable industry we have been celebrating, must depart with the last guinea.

This is plausible, and is consistent with the order of things in common business; but in arguing a point of such a peculiar nature, we must not trust too much to analogy, nor adopt a figurative language, where facts only ought to be produced and discussed. The industry

of the rich is so far from being abated in the case stated, that it may be said to be very much increased; and to have added to it, that which will quicken every species of industry, a never-ceasing and painful anxiety. The object only is changed; and the pains now bestowed, the ingenious arts, the close application, and the sleepless nights, are expedients to bring back what former industry had dispersed; and as this must be a much more difficult aim than the other, in proportion to that difficulty is their industry increased, to a degree which few mechanicks can understand. But, were this mere industry, it would still serve but to raise them to an equality with those who think them idle; it is, however, more—it requires not only bodily fatigue and common degrees of anxiety, suspense, and care, but a mind as fertile in resources as that of the most original genius, and one capable of discovering resources of the most extraordinary kind. My readers may have probably heard this ingenuity called a "raising of the wind;" and from many instances of late date that have been made public, it seems to be effected by engines of very uncommon powers.

There is only one circumstance which I shall notice, with a view to remove the prejudices of

those who fancy themselves the only industrious persons in the world, and all others idle; or that their labour is no better than amusement. If this matter were carefully inquired into, I apprehend it would be found that there is very little of amusement in the occupations we have detailed, and that no occupations, either in progress or in consequences, are attended with more serious effects. As to the mechanicks asserting that they only are conscientiously industrious, and that the others scarcely know what conscience means, it is an assertion easily disproved. The parties alluded to are those who, above all others, know, sooner or later, not only what conscience means, but what it can do, and who have nothing so much to regret as that they were, in the midst of their active employments, too deeply engaged to cultivate the acquaintance of so useful a monitor.

THE PROJECTOR. Nº 95.

"Satis eloquentiæ, sapientiæ parum."
SALLUST.

May 1809.

In a world full of complaints, he may be said to perform a very useful office, who endeavours to reconcile mankind to their lot, and to vindicate those, who, for some reason or other, are exposed to general censure and obloquy. In such laudable endeavours, the Projector is always happy when his feeble efforts appear to have been successful, and he is encouraged to proceed from one step to another, until he shall have restored that good humour which seems wanting in our social intercourse.

There is a class of beings who at present demand his aid, as being alternately blamed and encouraged, with such variety of treatment, that it seems highly requisite to adjust their deserts. They are commonly known by the name of GOSSIPS, and they are commonly ranked among the Consumers of Time; which

very few have the ability to get rid of, without calling in help. Time is, indeed, an article, as I have already perhaps too often repeated, which appears to demand the efforts of joint companies, or numerous firms, and is seldom consumed in any considerable quantity by solitary individuals. Whether an investigation of the History and Practices of Gossips will tend to throw a favourable light on their character, is accounted by some a dangerous experiment; but it is worth trying, because, if it succeeds, the venerable society of Gossips may be rescued from some share of the blame so frequently imputed to them; and, if it fails, they will not be left in a worse condition than they were found. I shall, therefore, without any farther preface, enter upon the consideration of the HISTORY, TALENTS, and USEFULNESS of Gossips.

With respect to their HISTORY, my materials are rather scanty. That they are entitled to the honours of antiquity, can be decidedly proved; as they are expressly mentioned in a book, which is one of the oldest, and, as many very judicious persons think, one of the best. In that work, they are noticed by the names of "Tatlers and Busy-bodies;" and their description accords very exactly, *viz.* that "they

wander about from house to house," or, as some translate the word, "gad about from house to house;" a species of locomotion which agrees with the modern practice of the genuine Gossip. There is another characteristick mentioned in the same place; that "they speak of things which they ought not;" but as this, as well as the whole of the account given in the above-mentioned book, is given with an unfavourable bias, it may be necessary to add, that I quote it here purely as a historical fact. Tatlers and Busy-bodies are, in the Greek original, the same which we express by the word Gossip; which, Lexicographers inform us, is of Saxon derivation, and originally meant, "the person who answered for a child in baptism." Nothing is more curious in our language, than to be able to trace a word from its original meaning to one which is more common, although directly opposite. But, in the present instance, the transition from one who answers for a child in baptism, to one who answers for every body in every thing, is not so violent as may at first sight appear. There seems a something in the present practice of Gossips, which may be regularly traced up to their first occupation. They were first employed at christenings; and, to this hour, one

of the principal topicks on which they employ their skill is marriage, a state of life which, among its other effects, has a natural tendency to produce christenings.

Our earliest writers take notice of Gossips, sometimes under that name, and sometimes under the more antient titles of Tatlers and Busy-bodies; but the character, in all cases, is the same; and the only question is, what nation had the honour of first producing them? Without consulting a much greater number of volumes than are on my shelves, or than, if they were there, I have time to consult, it would not be easy to assemble a number of historical facts sufficient to decide this point. From the few researches, however, which I have been able to make, I think we may very fairly risk the conjecture, that Gossiping was not much known in the earlier periods of the history of man. Important as it may be in our time, it is highly probable that the world went on for some centuries without it. When men were solely employed in providing for the necessities of existence, and had no leisure for any employments that were not of immediate and practical utility, and particularly when they associated in small divisions not much connected with each other, we cannot suppose

that Gossiping would be very common.' On these accounts, I am inclined to be of opinion, that Gossiping did not exist among nations which had any better employment.

It is, therefore, highly probable, that it first appeared, and kept pace with the progress of civilization (Gossips being of all people the most civil). Gossiping began when large cities were built; when increasing riches enabled men to divide labour into so many parts, that some could contrive to be without any great share, or get their neighbours to do for them what they were too indolent or too ignorant to do for themselves. And if this argument be carefully considered, and compared with historical facts, it will probably be found, that Gossiping and Idleness were nearly coæval.

As to the nation which had first the honour of bringing the art of Gossiping to perfection, it might excite a turbulent jealousy, were we to carry our speculations to a hasty decision. The authority I have produced, as to its origin, shews that it once existed in nations that are now almost blotted from the map; but, as it did not perish in their downfal, the probability is, that it followed the usual revolutions of kingdoms and states, and was introduced into our nation in the same way that we re-

ceived other exoticks. All that can be said, with a view to establish a preference in favour of our own people, is, that, although our soil and climate produced but few articles originally, yet we have always had the good fortune to receive every thing curious and useful from other nations, and the happy knack of making them grow to the highest perfection among ourselves. We have always been rather improvers than inventors. And those who have leisure to examine what are the natural, and what the adventitious productions of our country, will probably discover the same progress in the history of a Gossip, as of a potatoe. If, therefore, English Gossips are more perfect in their art, or more numerous, and more alert than those of other nations, which I shrewdly suspect is the case, it is only an additional proof, that we have made greater advances in the improvements of civilized and social life than our rivals. Perhaps, too, in this, as in other cases, the freedom of our political constitution may have some share; for it would be difficult to conceive how Gossips could flourish without being allowed to take some very extraordinary liberties.

Having offered this brief sketch of the History of Gossips, we come next to their

TALENTS, or genius; and this, in truth, will be found to constitute the chief foundation of that apology for their conduct which is the object of the present lucubration. Their TALENTS are, perhaps, more extensive than the limits of one paper will allow me to enumerate. They may, however, be generally included under the heads, 1. *Knowledge*, 2. *Eloquence*, and 3. *Industry*.

1. Their *Knowledge* must be confessed to be superior to that of any persons who make knowledge their study, or aim at it as their distinction. They are not only acquainted with those general and common events, some notion of which is scattered among the publick at large by means of newspapers, but they know a great deal more than can be reduced to writing, or be readily comprehended, in the present confined state of human belief. The world, indeed, is so little capable of taking in the facts which they divulge, that they are obliged to be very circumspect in the parties to whom they communicate, and therefore throw an air of secrecy, and even of mystery, over their narratives. In the performance of this delicate task, in imparting knowledge, so intimate that nothing is hid, and so authentic as to be purified from the least particle of doubt, they

make use of a peculiar language, a *vox oculis subjecta*, which is neither necessary nor usual in the common intercourse of mankind, but, in the case of gossiping, assists the human voice in the most surprising manner, and approaches more nearly than any other contrivance yet known, to that important *desideratum*, an universal language. This is accomplished by certain motions of the head, eyes, and shoulders, which cannot be intelligibly explained here without the use of engravings. But about this I am not anxious, as my present object is to give a mere outline of the art; and as the subject will be readily understood by any person who has the honour to be acquainted with a Gossip of ordinary skill; and, I may surely ask, who can say that they have passed through life without knowing a Gossip? Whose curiosity have they not gratified, and whose time have they not occupied?

Connected with this language of the head, eyes, and shoulders, and which is spoken in nods, winks, and shrugs, is,

2. The *Eloquence* I have attributed to Gossips. This is particularly distinguished by its fluency. The speaker is never at a loss, but pursues the favourite subject from sentence to sentence, and from clause to clause, in a man-

ner that may put to shame those barren orators who cannot trust themselves for five minutes without a written copy. They are, indeed, the ablest masters of what are called the *extempore* and the *off-hand*. It is necessary, however, to notice that quality, to which they are not a little indebted for the full, deep, and rapid stream of eloquence, as well as the more silent, whispering, and babbling rivulet of communication employed on certain subjects; I mean. *Invention*. Invention is nearly as much the characteristick of Gossips as of Poets; as, without it, neither can be entitled to the full honours of their fraternity. But, of the two, the Gossip has the greater advantage. The Poet may get some reputation, although he only translates; or he may steal his imagery and his sentiments with impunity; but the Gossip has no such resources. The very essence of his narrative is, that the particulars shall be new; such as could not have been borrowed, such as could have entered into no imagination but his own, and such as few persons can venture to repeat with safety. One happy effect, therefore, of the *Invention* of the Gossips is, that their narratives are never imperfect; nothing is left to the imagination or conjecture of the hearer;

all is minute and satisfactory, and doubts are removed the moment they are started. How preferable is this to History, in which we find so many blanks, defects, and uncertainties, as to render events of great importance exceedingly obscure; and all because the Historian advances nothing but what he can prove, and knows no more than he can find.

The third branch, included under the general head of TALENTS, is the *Industry* of the Gossips. Of this it may be sufficient to say, that it is unremitting. In very expressive, although somewhat vulgar language, they may be said to be "always at it;" and this constant labour is, no doubt, produced by a certain enthusiasm for the honour of their art, and is encouraged by their success in gratifying their friends. It admits of no obstacles from time or place; the Church being as frequently the scene of a bit of Gossip as the parlour. Some, indeed, who still entertain a prejudice in favour of the interior of a Church being devoted for other purposes, will restrain themselves until they reach the porch; but, in such rare cases, I should suspect a want of genuine feeling, or a costiveness of communication which ill becomes the true Gossip. On the other hand, the Church, or any other pro-

hibited place, seems the fittest for that expressive language of the head, eyes, and shoulders, which can be spoken with no other aid from the voice, than a proper name now and then, or a few particles by way of connexion.

But what assists the industry of the Gossips is, that, as soon as they have taken to this employment, they forsake every other. Many of them, therefore, are content to possess some small independence, which leaves them at liberty to carry on the Gossiping art all hours of the day, if hearers can be procured. And this leads me more particularly to notice the persons and situations of genuine Gossips, with which I shall conclude the present lucubration.

It has been doubted by writers on the subject, of what sex Gossips are; and, although they have have not come to an absolute decision, they incline to the opinion, that they are principally of the female sex. I have, however, seen so many specimens of genuine Gossips of the male gender, that I cannot hastily subscribe to their exclusion. The question, however, is a very delicate one; and may be safely left to the consideration of my readers, who, I have no doubt, will pronounce such a decision as their experience may warrant. There is, indeed, one circumstance which

militates in favour of the softer sex; and that is, that Men Gossips, after they have practised the art for some years, are observed to change, I know not how, their sex, and are universally ranked as *Old Women*.

With respect to the persons of Gossips, it may also be remarked, that they are old, or inclining to old age; and, with respect to their situation in life, they are generally single, or, if married, without children. Why these circumstances should incline to, or promote the art of Gossiping, will require some consideration; especially when we join another circumstance of a peculiar nature, namely, that genuine Gossips not only are found destitute of those charms which compose beauty, but have such a singular aversion to it, as enables them to introduce into their art many very interesting varieties of narrative, description, and dialogue. But of all this, as well as the USEFULNESS of Gossips, in my next.

THE PROJECTOR. Nº 96.

"Fill'd up at last with interesting news;
Who danc'd with whom, and who are like to wed,
And who is hang'd, and who is brought to bed."

COWPER.

June 1809.

In my last Paper, I entered upon the consideration of the HISTORY, TALENTS, and USEFULNESS of GOSSIPS, a class of persons who are very much censured, at the same time that they are very much encouraged, and whose character consequently cannot be very well understood. In that Paper I gave a short sketch of the first two branches of this important subject, namely the HISTORY and TALENTS of the Gossips; and concluded with a few remarks on their persons, as a prelude to the third and last branch, namely, the USEFULNESS of Gossips.

That they are useful will require little proof, if we appeal only to the favour that is generally shewn to them, the welcome with which they are received, and the patience with which they are heard. It would be impertinent,

therefore, after such proof, to inquire, as some fastidious persons may be inclined to do, of what use are they? But, as we cannot be certain that such a question will not be put, it may be proper to answer it by stating, that, in this world, some persons seem born to be curious, and others to gratify curiosity, and that the junction or meeting, whether designed or accidental, of these two classes, necessarily must produce Gossiping; one great use of which is, to satisfy the hearer as to all matters which he would wish to know.

Another very important use of Gossiping is, to supply the defects of those records which we call History, Annals, Journals, and Newspapers, as to domestic events, which every one must confess are of more near importance than the fate of kingdoms and states, the issue of wars and battles. It is true, indeed, that the newspapers of late years have very much enlarged their plan, by penetrating into the secrets of families, and recording, with minute fidelity, the progress of a dinner, a rout, or a ball, insomuch, that many have conceived that these papers, after having been unsuccessfully conducted by politicians, have at length fallen into the hands of Gossips, assisted by their usual *aid-de-camps*, ladies-maids and valets,

in or out of place. But, minute as the papers have lately become, they are but partially entitled to the merit of affording a full gratification to curiosity, in those points of which they profess to have a complete knowledge. Instead, for example, of telling us what was said, what reports were circulated, what intrigues begun or continued, what money lost or won, what tempers softened or irritated, they content themselves with telling us how the rooms were illuminated and the floors chalked, what geraniums ornamented the grand staircase, and what Bow-street officers dignified the principal entrance. Instead of the mischief threatened to the reputation of a lady, we hear only of the damage done to the glasses of a chariot, and instead of the information which precedes a meditated elopement, we hear of nothing but the confusion and faintings of ladies in getting to their carriages; nay, so far are we from learning the precise hour when Lord B. prevailed over the marriage vows of Lady C. that the parties have been allowed to become notoriously guilty, before one syllable of the matter has transpired.

One principal branch, therefore, of the USEFULNESS of Gossips, is, to fructify this barrenness of intelligence, and that, by a method of

publication which newspaper-writers cannot adopt, namely, imparting the matter in confidence to every person they meet. It is true, indeed, that some newspapers have attempted to do this by certain dashes, hints, and innuendos; they sometimes gratify their readers with a *crim. con.* affair "not an hundred miles from Grosvenor-square;" and they occasionally regale them with the detection of "a certain Colonel," with the lady of "a certain Baronet;" nay, they even go so far in their struggles for perspicuity as to give up the names of Colonel P***t and Lady B——l. But whoever is acquainted with the true nature of Gossips and Gossiping, must be sensible that all this is far short of the *vivâ voce* information, whether doled out in hints and broken whispers, or lengthened out into a narrative, abounding in dialogue and digression.

An apology, however, ought to be offered for the papers, and they shall not be deprived of it. Much as Gossiping is encouraged, there are still some persons, or rather personages, who have a particular aversion to seeing their own affairs canvassed in publick, and are therefore apt to ask a newspaper editor where he got his information? The question is awkward; sometimes not very safe, and sometimes

not very easy to be answered. That caution, therefore, may be necessary in the case of a newspaper editor, which can never be necessary to a genuine Gossip, to whom no person would be so rude, unless in very particular circumstances, as to put such questions. It is the peculiar privilege of Gossips to be exempt from all responsibility, and from every interference with that fertility of imagination which enables them to make, or to embellish a ready-made anecdote, with circumstances of exceeding interest and minuteness.

This privilege alone marks the USEFULNESS of the GOSSIPS, who, if they were tied down to the dulness of matter of fact, to a sort of prose annals, like a Gazette, would soon be banished from all genteel society, instead of being welcomed with open ears and faithful memories. Being, therefore, under no kind of restraint, they administer the highest gratification to the curious; and, whatever defects may be in the narrative itself, they are ever ready to supply it with *extempore* particulars, enough to satisfy the most scrupulous, and to convince every hearer that he is in possession of a full, true, and exact account of all that was said, and all that passed, upon the best authority, and communicated by persons who could not

but know all the circumstances, for some were actually present, others came in not an hour after, some knew that it must take place, and others had it from the mouth of one of the parties.

Having advanced thus much on the USEFULNESS of Gossiping, some remarks present themselves on the art itself. It has been observed by persons whose ears have been long accustomed to Gossiping, that all Gossips are not alike in genius. There seems not much depth in this observation; yet it is necessary, in order to obviate the suspicion of our writing the history of every pretender to this useful art. Their talents are, indeed, as different in this as in any other branch in which fancy is the chief source of delight. While some have scarcely imagination fertile enough to furnish a plain tale or fable, others can soar to the sublimities of an epick; and even the most common occurrences are sufficient to evince the amazing difference that prevails between Gossips. If one gets hold of a piece of frailty in high life, he will content himself with the name of the parties, the places of residence, the places of flight, and perhaps the length of time the affair was smoking before it burst out into a flame. But let a Gossip of more talent handle

the same story, and we shall hear a thousand particulars which the other could not conceive possible or necessary. Such is superiority of genius, that the whole thoughts and affections of the parties are laid open, every syllable that passed is given with minuteness; what every relation said when he or she first heard of it; and, what is yet of more consequence, the genuine Gossip knew all this long ago; had seen things which very plainly shewed that all was not as it should be; remembered that almost half a year ago, at Lady G——'s assembly, an event occurred which might have convinced any person of common discernment; and, in fact, the thing was so plain, that it was quite astonishing that neither the Duke nor the Earl should have entertained the least suspicion; the whole concluding with an exact description of the inn where they stopped the first night, the number of post-horses lamed, and post-boys bribed, the infinite distress of the Dowager her mother (for she was her favourite daughter), the hour at which her uncle the Bishop came to town, the name of the proctor employed, and the astonishment that people should have been so long in the dark.

Another remark that may be offered, as the

conclusion of this subject, is, that the most eminent Gossips are liable to misfortunes, which entitle them to some degree of commiseration. They are persons of original genius, it is true, and possessed of an imagination so fertile, as seemingly to exempt them from the difficulties and slow progress of those who deal only in proofs and authenticks. But genius is no protection against disappointments; and there are thousands who cannot enter into the spirit of a well-imagined narrative, and who no sooner hear it, than they are seized with a fit of incredulity, accompanied with a propensity to contradiction. And, what is worse, their incredulity increases on every question which they are prompted to put, and their contradiction, if it were to be expressed as it is conceived, would often be expressed in very rude language.

"Now, although a genuine Gossip is not absolutely destitute of the means of repelling such attacks, his or her situation is liable to become very critical. There are no means of answering questions but by inventing answers, and no mode of producing authorities but by creating them for the purpose, and asserting that such authorities are "persons of undoubted veracity"—"those who know the family well"—

"have long been in habits of intimacy"—"live in the same street, or at the next door"—"have seen a great deal more than is necessary to be told, although all will come out by and by as clear as the day." And as to flat contradiction, which is the highest pitch of infidelity, the Gossip often feels much mortification that the pains taken have not succeeded better, and determines that the next story shall not be told before people that are so exceedingly unpolite and unbelieving.

And this, indeed, is the way in which Gossips in general wish to avoid falling into such difficulties, namely, by reserving a display of their talents for those families that have a true taste for works of imagination, and whose tables are open to persons pregnant with anecdote. Fortunately for Gossips, such families may be found in every part of the town, and a comfortable livelihood may be picked up by visiting them in turn, big with events, embellished by those pleasing particulars and satisfactory additions which fancy supplies, and which, by often repeating, acquire for a time all the interest and importance that could be wished.

But, notwithstanding the pains that are taken to procure hearers and believers, persons

who will not only give an ear, but a dish of tea, it frequently happens, that time, much of which is consumed in the art of Gossiping, takes its revenge by subverting the whole fabrick of a finely-imagined narrative. It may, therefore, be humbly submitted to the fraternity and sisterhood of Gossips, whether, upon the whole, some regulations might not be introduced in the exercise of their art, in order to render it more safe. And although, after offering this suggestion, I do not think myself obliged to specify what such regulations ought to be, yet, as I am not one of those reformers who complain of abuses without offering remedies, I shall briefly mention, not only as my opinion, but that of many, more judicious persons, that a somewhat greater proportion of truth mixed in their narratives, if it did not enable them to *tell* better, would at least enable them to *keep* longer. Every candid Gossip must allow, that it is shocking to think that the best-contrived narrative at dinner may be completely overturned by the time the tea is called for. I have even known an instance, where the entrance of a man in perfect health, who died the preceding night in great agonies, has not only spoilt the effect of a bullet in the lungs, but has rendered unnecessary many in-

teresting anecdotes of his past life, many eager struggles to succeed him in his house and grounds, and much curious information as to what his fine flaunting lady and daughters will do now he is gone!

But if this regulation, the only one I shall suggest, and the only one I think effectual, be rejected, as having a destructive tendency on the trade and mystery of Gossiping, I can only follow it with recommending some other trade in lieu of it; for I have already proved in my last paper that Gossiping was first introduced by persons who had nothing else to do, and has since been perpetuated by those who choose to do nothing else.

THE PROJECTOR, Nº 97.

"You hold the word from Jove to Momus given,
That Man was made the standing jest of Heaven;
And gold but sent to keep the fools in play,
For some to heap, and some to throw away." POPE.

July 1809.

THERE is no one subject about which the opinions of mankind are more widely at variance that that of wealth; yet there are few that have been more frequently brought into discussion; and, when we consider the many dissertations which have been published, and the many conversations that are daily held on this topick, it is surely not very unreasonable to wonder, that difference of opinion should yet prevail, and that so few conclusions have been drawn which may be brought into practice.

Of rules and advice, indeed, we are in no want. Moralists and preachers have never failed to repeat, from generation to generation, certain prudential maxims, and to make certain appeals to reason and conscience, which, if duly attended to, might have been productive

of much good. All the consequences of the love of money have been fairly laid before us; and we cannot pretend that we have theory only in favour of the instructions offered, since we, cannot look for a moment on the busy world, without finding examples and confirmations that are irresistible. But there is still something in the nature of hard cash, which disposes certain persons to form very odd notions about it, and to be extremely pertinacious in retaining them; and these notions will, I am afraid, continue to create differences among mankind while there is a guinea left.

So obstinate, indeed, are we in our theories on this subject, that perhaps there is no cause of quarrel so very common and predominant, nor any thing that enters so largely into the composition of the human character. One particular may be sufficient to illustrate this assertion; whatever may be the quality of wealth, one might naturally expect that a calculating nation would have long ago acquired some correct notions about its quantity; but, so far is this from being the case, that, during all the centuries in which we have been a commercial nation, we have never been able to ascertain what is *enough;* and it is very certain, that, until we can come to some conclusion on this

point, our disputes must be renewed every day to no purpose, and constitute a perpetual fund of unavailing contest, between anger which no man regards, and advice which no man takes.

Amidst this vast variety of jarring opinions, contradictory theories, and irreconcilable practices, there is one class of men, of whom I have often contemplated several bright examples, who at least deserve the praise of *consistency;* I mean those who, in common language, "will do any thing for money." When we say of a man, "that he will do any thing for money," we bestow upon him that character for consistency, the want of which creates so many anomalies and oddities among men of every other description. Others are timid and half-formed characters, this man alone is complete; others are unfinished sketches—in this the outlines are filled up, and all the forms are decided, bold, and unalterable. Whether, however, in such men, the love of money, or the love of consistency, originally prevailed in the formation, may admit of a question; but it will admit of no question, that, when once a man has determined that he will "do any thing for money," he becomes emancipated from all those doubts, difficulties, and embarrassments, which so often perplex the rest of mankind.

The praise of being a decided character is

reckoned very high; and we can nowhere look for more complete examples of it, than among the class of men whose consistency I have undertaken to celebrate, and who deserve this at the hand of every moral Projector, because they, and they only, are the persons who, without troubling their own heads or ours with long dissertations, trains of argument, and beauties of declamation, shew us the *real* worth and *true* value of riches to human happiness. And it must be observed to their honour, that, in doing this, there is nothing wavering, irresolute, or capricious in their conduct. One day's actions are not at variance with those of another; and age itself, which makes men to relax in other pursuits, seems only to redouble their desires, and to invigorate their zeal.

Among the mass of mankind, what are called reason and conscience seem to have great weight in determining the nature and modes of their conduct; but, as these principles are either not well understood, or not fairly consulted, the only consequence is, the infinite variety of good, bad, and indifferent, which we perceive in human affairs, and that large portion of the doubtful, the perplexing, and the mysterious, which is perpetually forcing us to inquire,

whether such a man be a rogue or a fool. But when once we find a man who will do any thing for money, we find a man whose character is too open to demand our utmost scrutiny, and too consistent to leave us for a moment at a loss how to appreciate it as we ought. And, indeed, such is the convenience of possessing a character of this kind, so obvious, so plain, so decided, that we never meet with two opinions on the subject.

It is true, that some small degree of imperfection necessarily adheres to the best of us in this world. I have known a man who, while he professed to do "any thing for money," would sometimes talk a little whimsically about integrity, liberality, and other contested points, and would even go so far as to expect to be believed. This, when pushed to excess, may seem to detract from the consistency which I have attributed to this class of men; but, where it appears only in a less degree, I cannot help thinking it ornamental and becoming; nor ought it to give offence to the rest of mankind, since it may have some tendency to do them good, and has a very natural tendency to make them laugh. As to its proceeding to excess, I have only known that to happen when, in pursuance of the grand original principle, it

has been necessary to yield a little to the prejudices of the publick. In this case, the man who affects to be thought liberal and honest, both which qualities he dislikes, from the expence with which they are attended, is but labouring in his vocation, whether he pays for paragraphs in a newspaper, or hires a mob to take off his horses. In all this he is still the man who "will do any thing for money;" still the consistent character, exhibiting itself under one of those pleasant disguises that hide nothing from the attentive observer.

Without such characteristicks, it may be also observed, that the man who "will do any thing for money," would not be so highly accomplished as is necessary. "Where there is *shame*," says Dr. Johnson, "there may be *virtue*;" but if the good Doctor had considered the men of whom we are now speaking, he would have added—"and where there is virtue, there may be a want of *the ready*." These two words, *shame* and *virtue*, unless where they happen to be merely words, are sore obstructions in his way, who is disposed to "do any thing for money;" nor would he adopt them voluntarily at the risk of a shilling a-piece. If, however, he has arrived at the length of pretending to qualities opposite to

his natural bias, and if he goes yet farther, and wishes to pass with the world as a man of liberality and integrity, he may comfort himself that he has got rid of shame and all its disagreeable consequences.

In farther defence of my heroes, I must say, that the world is so fastidious in these matters, that it sometimes becomes necessary to comply, or to seem to comply, with its prejudices, merely in self-defence; but, beyond the strict principles of self-defence, no man that "will do any thing for money," can ever carry his complaisance. The world at large, indeed, is so very unreasonable in its demands, that it would be impossible to comply, without a very considerable expence, particularly in the articles of charity or generosity, which the experience of the class of men I am pleading for shews, are the most unproductive of all speculations, and have a tendency to bring on that kind of reputation which would expose them to continual solicitations; and if it were to be concealed, as affairs of that kind sometimes are, would be still more unprofitable. Let not the world, therefore, be too severe on men who "will do any thing for money," since they have their embarrassments as well as others; and, perhaps, were they to be very

narrowly inspected, they would be found to have fewer consolations.

But as consistency is that feature in their character which I have thought proper to celebrate, it may be necessary to add another particular, in which that consistency will be found to excel all that is attempted of the kind by the rest of the world. Most men who have had the praise of consistency have been discovered varying and changing. Some men are so altered in the course of years, that their friends can with difficulty recognize them. Some have been known to change their character by illness; others from various motives or persuasions; and age very generally produces new modes of thinking and acting. But nothing of all this is perceptible in the man who "will do any thing for money;" he would be contemptible in his own eyes, if he were to yield to common opinions and persuasions; and as to age, it is well known that he becomes more attached to his favourite system as he grows older, and is never more desirous to accumulate money, than when it becomes unnecessary for all possible wants, and he has, perhaps, lost the very power of counting it.

While the world continues to entertain no very favourable opinion of this class of men, it

may be supposed that they entertain a very good opinion of themselves. But even here, I presume, they act consistently. The man who "will do any thing for money" is not a proud man; he does not boast of what he does; nor will he if he can help it, exhibit the fruits of his doings. The establishment of a property-tax would have been a very fatal measure to men of this description, if their humility had not induced them to be shy of ostentatious disclosures. In truth, there is no ingredient in pride, and no species of that passion, to which the man who "will do any thing for money" can safely lay claim. Poverty, indeed, he will often affect, if it may be called affectation, of which there is some reason to doubt, for there are instances in which the dread of "coming to the parish" has been seriously entertained by men who left enough to have enriched every inhabitant of it. Others, who are perhaps not so far gone, are observed to part with a shilling or a sixpence as if it were the last of their store, and they had no knowledge where to get another. And where this occurs in old age, as is most frequently the case, who will say that the persons I have been describing are not among the most consistent of human beings?

* *

Having, therefore, praised them for that quality, it may be expected that I should conclude their character, by adding something respecting their usefulness in society; and, indeed, much might be said on this head. In a world where the greater part of mankind restrict themselves to certain performances only, the man who will "do any thing" must be accounted a being of more general usefulness. But I apprehend, that their utility principally appears, in their doing such things for money, as money only, in certain minds, would be thought an inducement to perform; and how many things of this kind are daily performed, we learn from the proceedings in our courts of law. In these places men who "will do any thing for money" are very often brought forward to explain their system, and illustrate their character, and in neither case very willingly. I have already hinted at their humility; and I may now add, that no men take more pains to conceal their operations, or seem more seriously angry when the inquisitive disposition of a Judge or a Barrister tempts them to ask questions on the subject, and to ask them in that rude kind of way which would force a reply from the humblest creature upon earth.

As it may be supposed that persons who "will do any thing for money" are not only the most consistent, but the most successful speculators in wealth, since it is not possible to conceive any impediment that should disturb their progress, I think it necessary to obviate this last opinion. Undoubtedly some are successful; that is, they acquire an almost incredible quantity of what they will do any thing for; but, on the other hand, they are liable to sudden revolutions and reverses; and it has been sometimes doubted, by very shrewd observers, whether, upon the whole, their plan has any other merit than that of consistency; and whether, in forming the resolution to "do any thing for money," it would not have been as well to except a few things, which are not very ornamental to a man's character. Be this as it may, it is certain that the conclusions of their lives have not always warranted the premises, nor been accompanied with circumstances strictly consistent; for some have been despised, although they died rich; and others have been pitied, although they were hanged.

THE PROJECTOR. N° 98.

"Ille communis, qui est cunctis in mortalibus, sensus."

ARNOBIUS.

August 1809.

In an admirable miscellany of reflexions and criticisms just published, under the title of *Anonymiana*, it is remarked, that "*Common Sense* is generally esteemed the most useful kind of sense; as, when we hear it said of a person of parts and learning, but giddy, thoughtless, and dissipated, running into debts and difficulties, and taking no manner of care of his affairs, that *he has all sorts of sense but Common Sense*." The same Author informs us, that "this *Common Sense*, or a good understanding, is a Latin phrase as well as an English one;" a circumstance which I quote with some satisfaction, for, in what may be here advanced in favour of Common Sense, I should be sorry to be thought a friend to innovations in morals or language.

Observations similar to the above have been frequently made by other writers; and we

scarcely pass a day without hearing of some advantages which Common Sense might have procured, or some mischiefs which Common Sense might have averted. But, while we pay a compliment to Common Sense, which seems to give it a superiority over the rest of our senses, it has not yet been explained why we call that *common*, which, we are told, men of parts and learning are not always able to attain, and which, if we may judge from the many examples of those who want it, does not seem to deserve the epithet so constantly applied to it. And this will appear the more extraordinary, if the opinion be just which some observers of mankind have formed, namely, that few men have Common Sense.

It has been thought that this apparent inconsistency is capable of being explained by a very trifling alteration in the language employed on this subject. If, for example, we say, that few men *use* Common Sense, it may still be true that the sense we speak of, the sense which distinguishes right from wrong, and proper from improper, is common, and so common, that few persons are found without it. As to the use of it, it is rather whimsical, that those who have made its existence to be doubted by not employing it in their own

affairs and conduct, are, at all times, extremely ready to apply it to the affairs and conduct of other people. Hence, the antient founders of our laws very wisely determined, that the decision of matters of right and wrong, just and unjust, should rest with twelve men, promiscuously taken from the mass of mankind, and not endued with more enlargement of understanding than is supposed to be included in Common Sense. And it is observed, that when they decide according to this sense, the world so generally acquiesces in their opinion, that there remains but one person dissatisfied, namely, he who has lost his cause; nor would he be a dissentient from their opinion, had he been in any other situation than that in which his obstinacy happened at that time to place him. It must not, indeed, be omitted in every discussion on this subject, that, however common this sense may be, there are very many who either are born with, or afterwards, by some means, contract an aversion to it, and who, knowing the value which others put upon it, are endeavouring to find out a substitute, which they are never able to accomplish.

It is as easy to suppose that a man may possess Common Sense, and yet act like a fool, as it is to suppose that a man may be rich without

liberality; the only use for which riches are calculated. The difference, indeed, between the possession and the use of our senses occurs so often, that Common Sense is by no means a solitary instance, although, in the daily intercourse of life, it may be allowed to be one of the most striking. Whoever has attained but a moderate share of knowledge of the world, or is but a superficial observer of what passes around him, must have frequently remarked that there are men who make very little use either of their eyes or ears, and who, in many matters of great importance and interest, are, to all intents and purposes, both blind and deaf. But it would be wrong to assert from such examples, that seeing and hearing are not Common Senses. The practice in such cases is not absolutely to renounce the use of eyes and ears, or to affect to be blind or deaf, but to delegate the use of our eyes and ears, for a certain time, to other persons, whom we suppose capable of directing us how to employ them. This, among one class of the community, is the origin of what we call Custom, and among another, the origin of what we call Fashion, the two great codes of law by which the little and the great are governed. That, notwithstanding this omnipotence of influence, they abound in absurdities, is frequently acknow-

ledged; and those absurdities would be more easily, quickly, and profitably discovered, if we had not agreed to suspend the use of our faculties.

Although there is not much wisdom in thus parting with natural for artificial senses, there is at least a degree of humility. Sometimes we find that a whole nation will consent to see and hear at the pleasure of half a dozen of its most worthless inhabitants. Sometimes an assembly of the most sensible and well-educated ladies will condescend to copy a dress, not because it is consistent with their own notions of taste or beauty, but because it is that in which a French strumpet has danced, or an Italian *bona roba* has sung.

Of all our senses, however, the subject of this paper, Common Sense, is that which is least employed where it would be most serviceable; and why a guide always at hand, a monitor always prompt to advise, should be suspended from his office in this capricious manner, is not easily to be discovered. Some may think that what is common must be vulgar, and therefore to be disregarded: and I have heard of a person of rank and wealth, who, while he undervalued Common Sense, allowed that it was very necessary "for people who had their bread to get." But, in accounting for the disuse of Common Sense, we shall

perhaps be more successful if we advert to a fact of some importance, the long contest which has subsisted between the senses and the passions. Even Vanity, to speak of no other of the great leaders and generals employed on the side of the enemy, will often baffle the strongest efforts of the understanding. Nor need we wonder that Common Sense should be so often set aside, when we consider how very apt it is to interfere with a certain train of conduct and behaviour that is thought very becoming, and with certain domestic and personal arrangements, which, being fashionable, must not be interrupted by any considerations of propriety or consistency, or by any of the feelings which compose self-approbation. Should Common Sense presume to intrude on such occasions, and perhaps threaten to degrade us into the rank of "people whom nobody knows," there are many who would reckon such intrusion and such alarm a very sufficient reason for dispensing with its services, and preferring what others do, to what themselves think right.

Nor ought the advocates for Common Sense to be loud in their resentment of this neglect, as if it were confined to their client only. The operations of reason herself are often suspended,

when they happen to clash with objects of more imperious necessity; such, for example, as a course of life sanctioned by high authority. What else could have impaired the fortunes of young men born to great affluence; or by what other means could we have out-rivalled all other nations, for a long series of years, in keeping up those honourable and dignified establishments, the gaming-houses and the race-grounds? What other means could human wisdom have devised more admirably calculated to increase the breed, and provide for the maintenance of that valuable class of men, known by the name of Jockeys, Betters, and Sharpers; or that more interesting class of females who are known by every name but the right one? In all this, the suspension of the higher faculty becomes necessary; because, the mere want of Common Sense will not prepare the mind for the requisite degree of stultification, nor leave that perfect void, which the employments alluded to are calculated to fill. Some have even supposed that conscience, as well as reason, has been dispensed with in such instances; but perhaps it may be doubted whether the parties have been taught the use or existence of any such sense. It is certainly not the interest of those who are about them

to say much on the subject; and it is equally certain, that if conscience does appear, it is at a very late period, when its operations are more severely felt than wisely understood.

The inconveniences which arise from neglecting Common Sense, Reason, and Conscience, have led some curious persons to inquire, whether these are not one and the same sense, expressed by different names; and indeed, if we except a few instances of inferior importance, in which manners only are concerned, perhaps this will be found to be nearly the truth. But the character of a man who has every sense but Common Sense is not confined to the instance given by the Author of the book I have quoted, *viz.* that of a person of parts and learning, but giddy, thoughtless, and dissipated; for a person thus described may be suspected of wanting more senses than one. The character may perhaps be applied with more propriety to a man of parts and learning, who is so destitute of knowledge of the world, and of decent manners, as to be perpetually giving offence by such blunders in speech, caprices of temper, and anomalies in behaviour, as the brightest parts will not be always thought sufficient to excuse. To this class also belong the well-meaning part of the world,

whose meaning must always be taken as an apology for their acting, who never do that well upon which they seem most intent, who are perpetually interfering in matters that nowise concern them, and producing an inextricable confusion of mischief, with the very best intentions; and who, after passing many years in fomenting disputes, with a view to end them, and in suggesting impossibilities, under the name of improvements, have nothing left to console them for hours of anxiety and disappointment, censure and chagrin, but a comfortable quantity of those best of all possible intentions, for which their friends are never thankful enough to make any allowance.

In other respects, it will not perhaps be found that Common Sense differs very much from Reason, or Conscience; and, in the ordinary business of life, they follow each other so closely, that it will require a nice eye to mark their boundaries, or distinguish their prerogatives. A worthy predecessor, Sir Richard Steele, has remarked, that "what we call Common Sense, suffers under that word; for it sometimes implies no more than that faculty which is common to all men; but sometimes signifies right reason, and what all men should consent to. In this latter acceptation of the

phrase, it is no great wonder people err so much against it, since it is not every one who is possessed of it, and there are fewer who, against common rules and fashions, dare obey its dictates."

But, whatever name we choose to employ, if we apply the test either of Common Sense, Reason, or Conscience, we shall be able to settle many questions, both in manners and in morals, with considerable facility, which are now contested. The rogue and the fool, for example, who have been thought very distant from each other, will be brought into very close contact; and the only regret will be, that a criterion so infallible should be so much neglected, and that the sense which is so common should be so seldom employed.

THE PROJECTOR. Nº 99.

September 1809.

"TO THE AUTHOR OF THE PROJECTOR.

"SIR,

"I SHALL make no apology for the abruptness with which I begin this letter, and for accusing you and your brethren, the whole tribe of Moral Essayists, of sundry mistakes and misapprehensions in the exercise of your lawful calling; which mistakes, I am of opinion, proceed from your being better acquainted, in some matters, with theory than practice; and from your sometimes meddling with the business and affairs of a world which you are obliged to contemplate at a distance. But, whatever may be the cause of your errors, there is one subject, and only one, upon which I mean at this time to address you; and as it is a very familiar one, and more frequently handled expressly, or casually hinted at, than any other, I hope you will not refuse immediate insertion to this my remonstrance.

"The subject, Sir, concerning which you seem most liable to misconception, is no other than that very familiar one, called Wealth or Riches; against which, you must excuse me if I say, that you have contracted many very narrow notions, founded on what I conceive to be very rare, a personal dislike. You seem to attribute all the mischiefs under the sun to riches; you take delight in repeating that it is the root of all evil; and, not content with the root, you exhibit such a pernicious stem, and such a collection of deleterious branches, that one would think you were describing the famous poison-tree, instead of speculating upon pounds, shillings, and pence. You represent rich men as the most miserable of all human beings; and, in all your fictions and novels, if any mischief of a more than ordinary kind is to be performed, it must, forsooth, be performed by a man of fortune. Your invectives, likewise, are so frequent and so pointed against wealth, that it would appear to be your intention to write it down, or represent it to the rising generation in such frightful colours, as to deter them from earning money, if they wish to avoid all that is ruinous and disgraceful.

"Now, Sir, although I have no reason to think that your lucubrations on this subject

have done so much mischief as you intend, or that they have brought even a single guinea into contempt, (unless, perhaps, because it was a single guinea); yet, as such doctrines as yours may be thought very rude towards the fashionable, and very unwise towards the commercial world, I have long had it in contemplation to animadvert on your opinions, and endeavour to convince you of your mistakes. But as I am not well qualified by education to carry on a regular train of philosophical argument, and as such an argument, however ingeniously contrived, might appear somewhat dull to your readers, I have thought that mode best which I find easiest, namely, to give you a true and faithful account of the influence and effects of Riches upon myself. And, as example is far beyond precept, a striking instance of the good consequences and blessings of Wealth may, perhaps, speak more in its favour, than the most eloquent harangue, without such illustration. And should I fail of producing all the conviction I hope for on your mind, my story may at least tend, in some degree, to moderate your style and your prejudices, when you come again to consider the subject.

"Some years ago, Mr. PROJECTOR, it was

my lot to succeed to the property of a very distant relation, whom I never saw, and who, during his life-time, had not found either leisure or inclination to inquire after me. How much I inherited by his death it is not necessary to specify, unless by comparison. It amounted to more thousands *per annum*, than I formerly possessed hundreds; and it consequently raised me from what is called a bare competence, to that fulness and superabundance which constitute 'the man of great fortune.' At this time, Sir, I was beyond the middle period of life, a bachelor, not remarkable for charms of person, or brilliancy of conversation; nothing superior in elegance of mind or manner; nowise remarkable for acuteness of judgment, or the finer discriminations of taste; confined to a few acquaintances, or *friends*, if you please, of my own level, but seldom admitted into the higher societies, or considered as one to whom any particular attention was due. Perhaps, indeed, my character, in the opinion of my employers (for I was in business), might at this time amount to little more than the qualifications of 'sober and honest,' which we expect in our servants.

"But, Sir, you may well blush for your many uncharitable censures of wealth, when I

tell you what a very favourable change my *thousands* wrought upon me, within a very few months after I had administered to my relation's will; I mean, as soon as it was known that I had so administered, and was in actual possession. I cannot, indeed, suppose you to be so callous as to retain your antipathies, after what I am about to tell you of the beneficial effects of riches; and therefore I shall proceed, without hurting your feelings by any farther appeal to your past conduct and sentiments.

"In the first place, then, as to my person, it is truly wonderful how it began to improve. Although not very tall, I became of 'a very good height;' what you would call a 'personable man;' and, although it was not in the power of Riches themselves to alter my complexion, yet a brown complexion, I heard, was 'manly;' and there was in my eye a something sparkling and lively, which, I was assured, 'the ladies noticed very much.' But these changes and improvements were, perhaps, less wonderful than what seemed to take place in my *age*. I had, not a twelve-month before, been thought what is called an 'old fellow,' too old for this, and too old for that, and, above all things, 'too old for matrimony, unless I wanted a nurse.'

"But, in whatever manner it came about, I have never been old since. My years have dropt off one by one, and frequently a dozen at a time, until I am left in 'the prime of life,' and 'far preferable to a parcel of boys, who marry before they know what they would be at.' I no longer hear of unequal matches, of old bachelors wedding young girls, and living to break their hearts. Indeed the many hints I receive from very sensible and circumspect mothers and aunts, who wish well to their children, and delight to see them 'well settled,' convince me that, as to *my case*, there are no girls too young; and that a majority of twenty or five-and-twenty years on the man's side is only a more certain way of carrying the election.

"This retrograde motion in my years, however, would be of little consequence, if it were not accompanied by other appropriate circumstances, to which, before I administered to my relation's will, I was a perfect stranger—I allude to 'something so agreeable, lively, and pleasant;' and a hundred other qualifications, 'calculated to make the married state happy'—such a fund of 'good nature' too, and 'sweetness of temper;' sometimes 'so entertaining,' and sometimes 'such a droll creature.' Nay, it is (and I have it from many and

good authorities) unanimously decreed, that I would not only make 'an excellent husband,' but 'one of the best husbands in the world,' to any one of the many young ladies whose parents, good people! have no earthly wish but to 'see them well settled in the world.'

"And these happy changes lead me, Sir, to others connected with them. I am not only become tolerably handsome, and of a very proper age; but my conversation-talents are prodigiously improved. In companies where formerly I dared only at my peril to hitch in a word, and where that word was received in silence, or with some inarticulate sound, not far removed from a sneer, I can now command time for the longest story, which is 'vastly entertaining;' and the dullest joke, which is sure to make them 'split their sides;' and some who, a few months ago, would have wondered what there was to cause a smile, now are ready to beg that I would not 'make them die of laughing.' My taste, too, is so much improved, that what I like every body likes; and my understanding is become so enlightened, my powers of argumentation so irresistible, my train of reasoning so perspicuous, and my proofs so clear and apposite, that no man ventures to contradict me. My opinion,

therefore, when I choose to give it, is a sure signal for concluding all debates. It is modesty only, Sir, which prevents my sending you many other remarkable instances of the praises bestowed on my quick and acute parts; all which are the more agreeable, because I lived so many years without them. Indeed, I never had reason to think my understanding much above the common level, until, as I said before, I administered to my relation's will.

"But, although it would not be decent to send you more praises of myself than are sufficient to shew how beneficially riches can change a human being, yet I may be permitted to expatiate on another blessing with which they have been accompanied, and which is usually reckoned one of the greatest, I mean *friendship.* Here I must say, Sir, that when I have read in lucubrations like yours, of the instability of friendship, and the scarcity of friends, I am tempted to think that such sentiments are dictated by men of very moderate incomes, or perhaps small annuitants whose property is irrecoverably diminished by taxes; for I can remember perfectly well, that I once partook of nearly the same narrow modes of thinking. But what will not riches do? My friends are now numerous, nay, beyond num-

bering, unless I could count the multitudes who court my acquaintance: every man is my friend, my 'dear friend,' and as sincere as words can express. In one respect, indeed, I own, their friendship appeared at first to take a very singular turn. I had not administered to my relation's will above a month (it was in September) before so many presents of expensive fruits, game, and other eatables, were sent, that I began to think my friends had mistaken my situation, and fancied that my relation had deprived me of bread to eat. Such, Sir, was my ignorance, but I have now conquered it; and although my establishment is not on a very great scale, and I have no family, I can at all times show you a larder worthy of the first of taverns, ample and various in its contents, and puzzling only in as far as I frequently know not how to dispose of the surplus.

"While I thus prove, in contradiction to your sentiments, that wealth is the cause of friendship, and all the comforts included therein, I may farther observe that my riches have produced effects of the happiest kind, which are not confined to me, their immediate possessor, but extend to every thing about me, nay to things inanimate. My house, my table, and

all that covers it, are of the very best kind, and so highly approved by the best judges, that if mere furniture and victuals could be proud, mine have good reason to be so, for nothing but praises accompany their entrances and exits. My wines are likewise in point of flavour and taste superior to any thing my friends ever knew, a circumstance which affords me much pleasure, as I was really no judge of such matters until I administered to my relation's will. I might also say something of my carriages and horses; but it is sufficient that my friends, who frequently use them, pronounce that they are an honour to Long-acre, and a credit to Tattersall's.

"And now, Sir, after stating that all these most salutary and beneficial changes have been effected upon me by the power of wealth only, may I not be permitted to remonstrate with you and your brethren, on account of those strange opinions and prejudices which you are daily hinting, or expressing, as if it were a misfortune to be rich? But I shall leave my story with you, or rather with your readers, who I hope will decide with the impartiality due to so important a subject. And if I decline employing harsh language on this occasion, which is usually thought justifiable in one who presumes that he has the best of the

argument, it is not because I think you do not deserve it, or because I dread that scratch of the pen which is certainly in your power; but, Sir, I refrain because, notwithstanding all you have advanced on the subject, I have every reason to think that the majority is of my opinion. I should not else witness those painful struggles to accumulate, which can have this only for their object.

"Before I conclude, however, I will be candid enough to own, that as no temporal felicity is without some small mixture of what men deem to be unhappiness, I have experienced that riches occasion some feelings rather of an unpleasant kind. Amidst the great benefits I have derived, and of which I have given you a faithful account, I have discovered that there are some things which riches will not procure, some enjoyments which they will not promote, and a great deal of time which they do not instruct us to get rid of in the easiest and most agreeable manner; and if you or any of your brethren will point out the proper method of avoiding these inconveniences, you will find one very willing to assist you in, Sir,

Your humble servant,

"Novus Homo."

Leaving this correspondent to his fate, I have to announce that in my next paper, the publick will hear some extraordinary intelligence respecting the PROJECTOR.

THE PROJECTOR. N° 100.

"Conticuit tandem, factoque hic fine quievit."

VIRGIL.

November 1809.

IN my last I promised my readers some very extraordinary news respecting the PROJECTOR; and I could easily conceive that such an intimation would occasion very many sagacious conjectures, and many anxious inquiries. It is incredible how many persons have given a gentle tap at Mr. URBAN's door, or called upon the venerable gentleman himself, merely to inquire "if any thing had happened to the Projector; to express their hopes that he would satisfy their impatience in his next paper, and in the mean time, they would be very much

obliged to Mr. Urban to let them know, if it was not a secret, what the meaning of the above intimation could be." I am now, therefore, to put an end to these anxieties and conjectures, by announcing, in due form, and with suitable concern, that the PROJECTOR is about to take leave of his readers, and, like other tradesmen who have long laboured in their vocation, to pass the rest of his days in retirement; and lastly, that he determined in one of those moments or hours of self-applause, from which Projectors are seldom free, to announce this affair in the present, rather than in the following month, because he would be sorry to cast any gloom on the festivities of Christmas.

But whether, the said hour of self-applause having expired, this piece of news will be followed with any testimonies of public regret, or of satisfaction; whether I shall be considered as one who is about to lessen the stock of public amusement, or as one who wisely makes his exit, when he can remain on the stage no longer; whether it will be thought that I have been turned out of my place, or have only resigned at a very critical time by way of prevention; all these are circumstances which must be left to that sagacity which, on such occasions, is never much at a loss in resolving per-

preferment, while but a shadowy conjecture, is very pleasing, I soon ceased to be flattered when I heard all the various opinions that have been propagated. I had no objection to my name appearing in the book bound in red leather, and I could very well have submitted to the grievous suspicion of filling a high station in the political world; but it was not quite so pleasant to hear it surmised that all I had written had no more lofty tendency than to place me at the head of a scheme for plaguing the brewers, or illuminating the streets, to the utter destruction of oilmen and lamp-lighters. Nay some went even farther than this (for where will the censorious stop?); and judging from I know not what criterion of consistency, concluded that I was one of those enterprising gentlemen who had at length reduced idleness to a system, and had determined to provide a third theatre for a town that cannot support two, merely because I have bestowed no little pains in expatiating on the value of time, and the increase of irrational amusements. From the hints I so frequently have thrown out on the unprofitable waste of time and money in the summer months, it has been very candidly conjectured that I have either been promoted to the rank of Master of the Ceremonies at one

of the watering-places, or have engaged in a building speculation at another. And as I had more than once represented the advantages of disinterested attachment, it was shrewdly supposed and openly declared that I had married a dowager, who would not let me write any longer lest I should be taken for an author.

It is true that nothing is so easy as to multiply the wisdom of uncharitableness, but I hope my readers will agree with me in deprecating so many unfounded reports. It is somewhat hard, after such painful and long-continued labour for the public good, to be suspected of insincerity; yet from the communications I have received during the short time that my resignation has been given in confidence to a few friends, I am sorry to find that what I have already related are not all the imputations with which my character has been assailed. A worthy citizen informs me, that because I have often inveighed against a life of dozing indolence, and sottish drowsiness, it is generally suspected that I have hired a box in the country, near a trout stream, and am to employ the remainder of my days in trying to keep myself awake with a fishing-rod, or a tobacco-pipe. This, it must be confessed, is hard; but it is harder still to be told by a correspondent who

dates from Bond-street, that I have now acquired a great deal of property, and, it is supposed, visit in the higher circles, at gaming routs, and Sunday concerts, merely because I have offered many arguments to prove that œconomy is a duty, that gaming is a more contemptible and irrational mode of extravagance than the enemy of mankind ever invented, and that some respect is due to public decency.

In answer to all this, I shall use very few words. I am willing to make some allowance for suspicions that may be founded on that experience which certain persons have within; and I am ready to concede that men of extraordinary talents in the art of professing, have very often been remarkable for a practice that has, by some means or other, been made to take an opposite direction.

Perhaps, too, the conjectures of which I now complain, may be in some measure attributed to the veil of secrecy which has hitherto covered my person. I have more than once received hints from some correspondents, who, disclaiming all motives of curiosity, would nevertheless be glad to be better acquainted with one who has, for so many years, thought proper to pay them a monthly visit. I have no doubt that my declining to comply with these

requests has sharpened the talents of conjecturers, who are never so well informed as when they know nothing; and disposed them to threaten me with supposes and perhapses, in hopes that I may be provoked to send them certainties in return. The history of the PROJECTOR, however, has been withheld merely because it has been too uniform to afford much amusement, and would therefore disappoint expectation. Long, indeed, as I have existed, a considerable part of my time has been spent in wondering where those remarkable adventures are to be found, without which it is thought that human life must be very uninteresting. Some persons, it must be confessed, have a very happy knack in meeting with wonders; nothing in this world, except perhaps their coming into it, happens in the ordinary way; and those who employ their talents in depicting human life in certain books that are called Novels, are obliged, if they expect to be read, to represent it as abounding in a succession of extraordinary escapes, unheard-of dangers, perplexing situations, and such surprising *denouements* and *eclaircissements* as never existed except upon paper, and yet, in compassion to boarding-schools and circulating

libraries, must be supposed to happen every day.

If, however, I have declined the request to make known my history, it is not without some constraint on the inclinations which are supposed to be peculiar to the race of Projectors. The man who writes his own life has so many advantages on his side, that it is wonderful we have so few specimens of these narratives. But let us take comfort; they are increasing, and those who have formerly been obliged to beg, borrow, or purchase flattery from others, may now trade upon their own stock. The principal advantage of this kind of biography is, that the author must necessarily be very intimate with his subject, be very deeply interested, and know better than any other person what to insert and what to suppress. Some Biographers have been censured for saying too little, and giving us only a meagre series of dates and preferments: but the man who writes his own life, while he is not deficient in these *minutiæ*, finds nothing meagre or uninteresting, and, whether he produces a child or a farce, whether he changes his house or his medicine, whether he appears in an assembly or a mob, and whether his wife makes a pudding or a

curtsey, each event is dignified by a serious and suitable prolixity of narrative. In all his information and all his reflections (unlike some wandering biographers) he never loses sight of his subject, a subject with which he is connected by ties to which every other person must be a stranger, and his readers most of all. And if to this we add the very natural and extraordinary curiosity of the publick to know what a man will say of himself, and how ingeniously he can contrive to differ from the rest of mankind, especially in points about which they are unanimously agreed, we must allow that those who write their own lives have encouragements and advantages superior to all other biographers.

At the conclusion of labours like mine, some would be perhaps desirous of knowing what good they had done, what benefits they had conferred, and what additions they had made to the general stock of useful matter. And although this is an estimate, which, for obvious reasons, the most conceited PROJECTOR cannot form with accuracy, and would suppress if he found the balance against him, yet I am not unwilling to acknowledge that the account, as far as made up to the present date, is not extremely flattering. But when I entered as a member

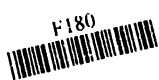
of the worshipful company of PROJECTORS, I was aware of what I had to expect. PROJECTORS have ever been a class of men in no very high favour with the publick; and while there is an uncommon degree of curiosity to know what they propose, there is a no less degree of repugnancy against carrying their schemes into execution. I cannot, therefore, flatter myself that I have been, in this respect, more successful than my brethren. I have been honoured with no votes of thanks for my zeal and patriotism; I have seen none of those beautiful superstructures rising above-ground, which I took so much pains to found; I have had no proposals to undertake the surveyorship of any of the plans so well delineated; and although I have communicated some very important hints on various topicks of morals and manners, I have not received one single invitation to witness the good effect of my instructions. If I may judge from the evidence of those infallible records, the Newspapers, I have no reason to think that much progress has been made in lessening the quantity of public absurdities, in illustrating the progress of domestic felicity, or in conferring upon society any of those substantial improvements that might

have been expected from what we term an enlightened age.

The present paper, however, will not be without its uses, if it affords an additional intimation of what has often been hinted in the course of my lucubrations; namely, that all Projectors and Projects must come to an end; and that however strange some positions here laid down may appear, there seems a general combination among the gay, the fashionable, and the pleasurable world to confirm them by striking facts and frequent examples.

THE END.

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